



The Voter

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

Co-presidents: Joyce Hertz and Randi Peterson; Voter Editors: Julie-Snyder-Yuly and Marisa Stadlman

From the President

It is Political Action Week (PAW) at ISU as I compose this letter. GSB is holding a week-long festival on central campus October 2-6. From 11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. each day, various university, city and state leaders plus a sprinkling of candidates join students in discussing a designated theme for each day. A free lunch is provided to help attract students. The League of Women Voters is represented at a display table advertising our candidate forums. Attendance has been modest at best, but I did get to visit with my two student nieces, Betsy Hertz and Julie Dickson Freeman.

If you are at all interested in the issues coming before the Iowa Legislature this coming year, I strongly urge you to attend the LWVIA Legislative briefing in West Des Moines on Saturday, October 14. The lineup of issues and speakers looks excellent. (For details, see article in this newsletter.) I will be driving, and you are welcome to carpool.

The Living Wage action group is hosting a noon meeting at Collegiate Presbyterian Church on Thursday, October 12. The LWV has invited other interested organizations and persons to learn about our position and discuss possible future activities.

At our last Board meeting, we discussed the proliferation of candidate forums being hosted by a variety of groups and organizations, most with a particular constituency they are trying to represent. The League of Women Voters has aspired to provide nonpartisan forums in neutral settings with open, public access including cable broadcast. However, we may need to reevaluate whether we are achieving our mission. Are we perceived as nonpartisan? Is the City Council Chambers a welcoming location or is it too formal, too small and uncomfortable, etc.? What perspectives should be represented on panel? We welcome input in the post-election season. Meanwhile, please consider attending the three candidate forums in October and bring another voter.

Finally, the Ukrainians are coming! The Ukrainians are coming! The Ukrainians are coming! We have a jam-packed schedule of events, meetings, tours and fellowship planned for October 14-22. Many people are helping with this wonderful project. I hope you can join in some part of the activities.

Joyce Hertz, co-president

Mark Your Calendar

Book Club

October 25, 2006 (Wednesday)

Noon: The topic of the Middle East: choose a book of your own or one from this list: *Inside the Kingdom* by Carmen Bin Ladin; *History of Arab People* by Albert Hourani; *Saladin* by P. H. Newby; *The Contemporary Middle East* APLibrary 956 CON 2006. Please come to the home of Marlene Weisshaar with some concepts to share.

General Meeting

October 19, 2006 (Thursday)

7:30 p.m. Voices from Ukraine
Northminster Presbyterian Church - Fireplace Room
1416 20th Street, Ames

Board Meeting

November 2, 2006 (Thursday)

7 p.m. - Selva Lehman's home, 4037 Fletcher Blvd.

Other Dates of Interest

October 12, 2006 (Thursday)

Noon - Living Wage, Collegiate Presbyterian Church, 159 N. Sheldon Ave

October 14, 2006 (Saturday) LWVIA Legislative Briefing - West Des Moines Public Library

October 16, 2006 (Monday) Candidates Forum

7 p.m. Ames City Council - Ames City Council Chambers

October 23, 2006 (Monday) Candidates Forum

7 p.m. Story County Offices - Ames City Council Chambers

October 30, 2006 (Monday) Candidate Forum

7 p.m. State Legislature - Ames City Council Chambers

League Activities



During October 14-22, the Ames League will be hosting a delegation from the Ukraine. This is the culmination of an effort that started in February 2006. That is when our League submitted a request to the LWVUSA to be considered as one of the host Leagues for this program that is sponsored in cooperation with the Open World Leadership Center. Ames is one of 10 Leagues chosen to host Russian or Ukrainian delegations.

Each host League receives a flat grant. The League also is reimbursed for expenses incurred (ground transportation, meals, social and cultural events, certified interpretation services) during the 8 days the delegation is here. Home-stays are a cornerstone of the Open World experience. Ann Campbell, Marlys and Jim Potter, and Barbara and Karl Gwiasda will be providing that experience for our delegates. Although many of the meals will be held in different restaurants. Sharon Wirth, Selva Lehman, and Marion and Harry Weiss will each be hosting an evening meal in their homes.

The focus of our program on Accountable Governance is:

- Interface and interactions among different levels of government (primarily local, county, state) for effective decentralization of government operations
- Transparent, responsive, and accountable government and non-governmental organizations
- Grass-roots involvement by citizens (unpaid service on councils, boards, committees, commissions) in decision making by government and non-governmental organizations

Some highlights of the program we have planned include:

- A day on the ISU Campus with presentations by Ardith Maney, Professor of Public Administration and Women's Studies, and Dianne Bystrom, Director of Catt Center for Women in Politics.
- A day learning about local city government and some non-profit groups in Ames.
- A day in Des Moines learning about state government and a day in Nevada learning about county government.
- Some special events include an experiential visit to Lehman's corn and soybean farm in Alleman, watching the Ames City Council Candidates' Forum on cable television, an

evening with Ukrainian students at ISU, a visit to a political party headquarters in Ames, and a tour of the Virtual Reality Lab at ISU.

In addition, our delegates will be presenting the program "Voices from Ukraine" at our League General Meeting on Thursday, October 19.

Because of the limits of space, it is not possible for us to open all activities to the membership at large. However, if you desire to participate in any of the special activities, please contact Selva at 232-5571 or at selvarl@mchsi.com.

Make sure that you come to the General meeting on October 19, where you will have a chance to hear their stories and visit with them.

What is the Open World Program?

Open World is dedicated to the memory of the great Russian scholar Dmitriy Sergeyevich Likhachev, who served as the program's honorary co-chair in its founding year. Shown

here with Dr. James H. Billington.



Congress authorized Open World as a Library of Congress-administered pilot project for a large-scale U.S.-Russia leadership exchange in May

1999. The first delegations of Russian political and civic leaders began arriving in the United States in July 1999. The program has grown since that time and now is administered by a separate legislative branch agency. What is now called the Open World Leadership Center opened its doors at the Library of Congress in October 2001.

Open World is a unique, nonpartisan initiative that brings emerging leaders from Russia, Ukraine, and other participating countries to the United States to work with their counterparts and experience American civil society firsthand. Ukraine was selected for participation in Open World because of its strategic position in Eurasia and its potential to contribute to regional stability. More than 10,500 Open World participants have been hosted in more than 1,500 communities in all 50 U.S. states since the program's inception in 1999. Ukraine participants have come from each of the 27 regions of that country.

A wide range of nonprofit and governmental organizations host Open World delegations, or oversee a network of local organizations that provide this hosting. The LWVUS is one of

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these organizations. The national host organizations or their local partners plan and conduct participants' professional programs, provide meals and accommodations, and arrange cultural and social activities.

The Open World Leadership Center provided grants to 11 U.S. organizations to host approximately 250 civic leaders from Ukraine in 2006. The four main hosting themes for the 2006 Ukraine civic program are accountable governance, independent media, NGO development and rule of law.

Some Background About Ukraine

Location: Eastern Europe, bordering the Black Sea, between Poland, Romania, and Moldova in the west and Russia in the east



Climate: temperate continental; Mediterranean only on the southern Crimean coast; precipitation disproportionately distributed, highest in west and north, lesser in east and southeast; winters vary from cool along the Black Sea to cold farther inland; summers are warm across the greater part of the country, hot in the south

Terrain: most of Ukraine consists of fertile plains (steppes) and plateaus, mountains being found only in the west (the Carpathians), and in the Crimean Peninsula in the extreme south

Population: 46,710,816 (July 2006 est.)

Age structure: 0-14 years: 14.1% (male 3,377,868/ female 3,203,738)

15-64 years: 69.3% (male 15,559,998/female 16,831,486)

65 years and over: 16.6% (male 2,635,651/female 5,102,075) (2006 est.)

Ethnic groups: Ukrainian 77.8%, Russian 17.3%, Belarusian 0.6%, Moldovan 0.5%, Crimean Tatar 0.5%, Bulgarian 0.4%, Hungarian 0.3%, Romanian 0.3%, Polish 0.3%, Jewish 0.2%, other 1.8% (2001 census)

Religions: Ukrainian Orthodox - Kiev Patriarchate 19%, Orthodox (no particular jurisdiction) 16%, Ukrainian Orthodox - Moscow Patriarchate 9%, Ukrainian Greek Catholic 6%, Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox 1.7%,

Protestant, Jewish, none 38% (2004 est.)

Languages: Ukrainian (official) 67%, Russian 24%, small Romanian-, Polish-, and Hungarian-speaking minorities

Literacy: *definition:* age 15 and over can read and write *total population:* 99.7%; *male:* 99.8%; *female:* 99.6% (2003 est.)

Some background: During the latter part of the 18th century, most Ukrainian ethnographic territory was absorbed by the Russian Empire. Following the collapse of czarist Russia in 1917, Ukraine was able to bring about a short-lived period of independence (1917-20), but was reconquered and forced to endure a brutal Soviet rule that engineered two artificial famines (1921-22 and 1932-33) in which over 8 million died. In World War II, German and Soviet armies were responsible for some 7 to 8 million more deaths. Although final independence for Ukraine was achieved in 1991 with the dissolution of the USSR, democracy remained elusive as the legacy of state control and endemic corruption stalled efforts at economic reform, privatization, and civil liberties. A peaceful mass protest "Orange Revolution" in the closing months of 2004 forced the authorities to overturn a rigged presidential election and to allow a new internationally monitored vote that swept into power a reformist slate under Viktor Yushchenko.

About the Delegates

Natalya-Danute Antano Bimburayte (F, 36) is the Chief Accountant of the Kherson Regional Charity Foundation. She is interested in Mass media's role in politics, campaigns and elections. Citizens' role in local governance, transparency and openness of government and access to information, historic and cultural preservation issues. Anti-corruption policy. She enjoys tennis, chess, swimming, cycling, music (1980 retro).

Host: Anne Campbell

Vasyl V'yacheslavovych Kashevskyy (M, 33) is the President of the Western Ukrainian Regional Public Organization "Volyn Resource Center"

He is interested in Citizens' role in local governance, use of information technology/internet in government/'electronic government', development strategies for small cities, strategy and planning in economic development and sustainable and environmentally friendly economic development. He also enjoys swimming, mountain climbing and fishing

Oleh Mykhaylovych Voytovych, (M, 37) is the Director-General, of the Ternopil Agency of Local Development. He is interested in citizens' role in local governance, budget process and tax policy - federal, state, and local levels and their interrelationships, business-government relations, role

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of organizations involved in economic and social development at state, regional and community level and support for entrepreneurship and small business initiatives
Host: Karl and Barbara Gwiasda

Yevhen Volodymyrovych Zolotarov, (M, 34) is the Director of PE "Ostannya Barrykada-Kharkiv" a Restaurant Business combined with promotion of modern Ukrainian culture (first Ukrainian art-club). He is interested in relations among federal, state, and local levels of government, US electoral system, political parties at national and local levels, election campaigns, campaign finance, and fundraising Anti-corruption policy. He enjoys swimming, bicycles, fishing
Host: Karl and Barbara Gwiasda

Facilitator:

Anna Vitaliivna Danilyuk, (F, 22) is a HR Department Intern at Philip Morris Ukraine, Kiev International University, Student Master's Program. She enjoys modern music, Jogging, swimming, reading business magazines and 20th century literature. Other Community Involvement: Translator Researcher with Mennonite Center. Researcher on the topic of "The Role of Higher Education in Every Woman's Life" Involved with AAUW (American Association of University Women)

Host: Jim and Marlys Potter

LWV Legislative Issues Briefing 2006

Saturday - October 14th
West Des Moines Public Library
Cost: \$10 per person

Following are details about the LWVIA Legislative Issues Briefing. This annual event is one of our very best activities - it provides time for learning, sharing, networking, fellowship, and fun! **Please come and encourage your League friends, and any 'prospective' members to join you in attending.** We know you'll enjoy it and feel "ready for whatever tasks and issues" we need to work on to ensure that the League's voice will be strong and 'on point' during the upcoming Legislative Session!

9:30 - 10:00 **Registration and Coffee**

10:00 - 10:05 **Welcome**
Marla Sheffler, LWVIA President

10:05 - 10:40 **What Can We Do to Improve Iowa's Water Quality?**

Rich Leopold, Executive Director of Iowa Environmental Council

10:40 - 11:10 **Voting Equipment Update**

Charles Krogmeier, 1st Deputy in Secretary of State's Office

11:10 - 11:15 **Break**

11:15 - 12:00 **Why Do We Need to Increase the Iowa Minimum Wage?**

David Osterberg, Director of Iowa Public Policy Project

12:00 - 12:50 **LUNCH***

12:50 - 1:10 Announcements

LWVIA Advocacy Committee

1:10 - 1:35 **What Should We Know About Voter Verified Paper Trail with Electronic Voting Machines?**

Carole Simmons, Chair of Iowans for Voting Integrity

1:35 - 2:00 **How Can We Improve How Campaign Finance Reports Are Filed?**

Karen Hudson, System Administrator of Iowa Ethics and Campaign Finance Disclosure Office

2:00 - 2:15 **How Do We Do Legislative Lobbying?**

Judie Hoffman, LWVIA Lobbyist

2:15 - 2:30 **How Can We Work To Reform Iowa's Correction System?**

Jo Ann Finkenbinder, Co-Chair LWVIA Sentencing and Corrections Committee

2:30 - 2:40 **Wrap-up**

*Lunch SPECIAL DIETARY NEEDS SHOULD BE INDICATED WITH YOUR RESERVATION

RESERVATIONS are requested on or before Wednesday, October 11!

Send or call your Reservations to:
Carol Hibbs 1641 Greenbranch Circle
West Des Moines, IA 50265
rileyhibbs@mchsi.com (515) 226-0875 (H)
(515) 778-9092 (Cell)

League Information

**7:30 PM General Meeting
Thursday October 19th
Northminster Presbyterian Church
Fireplace Room—1416 20th Street, Ames at
Voices from Ukraine**

This is your opportunity of getting to know the members of the delegation from Ukraine that will be in Ames from October 14 to the 22nd.

The program will be presented by the delegates who will tell us about themselves and their country.

Refreshment and fellowship will close the meeting.

Read more about the visit on the articles included in this VOTER.

Meet a Member

Lauris Olson

Lauris Olson, the Ames chapter's current Legislative Action chair, may be new to the board leadership team, but she takes pride in pointing out that her first affiliation with the league dates back to her childhood.



Lauris' mother was an active League of Women Voters member in Mason City, and Lauris can remember helping fold voter information guides and distributing information when she was still in grade school. Most of her high school days were spent in West Des Moines, where she temporarily lost interest in politics. Within a year of graduating from high school in Mason City, she rekindled her interest and has been following politics on all levels ever since.

Lauris is owner and publisher of Ames365.com, a community news and information website. The former section editor for the Des Moines Register's Ames Life and Times, she started covering Story County government, schools, business and organizations four years ago. It was her second time working for the Des Moines Register, having trained there as a news assistant and staff writer from 1992 to 1994. She has also worked in journalism as the national and international wire service editor for the Juneau (AK)

Empire, a reporter, editor and news director for two newspapers and a radio station in Northern Wisconsin, and the managing editor of the Ankeny Press Citizen. She says that the diversity of her education and work background uniquely lends itself to the arenas of journalism and self-employment.

Lauris has six post-secondary institutions, earning credits from North Iowa Area Community College, Tarrant College Junior College (Hurst, TX), Des Moines Area Community College, the University of Iowa, and the University of Minnesota, before landing as a news-editorial major at Drake University in 1991.

During those years, she worked in the lending and bar/restaurant industries, sometimes working as a mortgage loan specialist and a waitress or bartender simultaneously. She left the mortgage banking industry as an assistant vice president and branch manager of the Dallas/Fort Worth branches for Norwest Mortgage (now Wells Fargo Home Mortgage), having previously served them as the branch liaison and program coordinator for the executive management team.

She has also worked as a technician in the mental health and developmental disabilities field, a clerical worker for the state's Department of Vocational Rehabilitation, an adult education teacher in a maximum-security prison in Alaska, and a family service counselor for funeral homes and cemeteries in Des Moines.

League Activities

League of Women Voters of Ames
4037 Fletcher Boulevard
Ames, IA 50014

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.