



# The Voter

A Publication of the League of Women Voters of Ames, IA

Web-site: <http://www.ameslww.org>

## October 2009

### From the President

How did you find your way into the political arena?

Did nature or nurture determine that you would follow your family's involvement in election-related affairs? Did you sit on the sidelines until some issue impacted you or your loved ones personally? Or did it happen over time, starting with a cup of coffee with friends, followed by encouragement to read a certain book or an invitation to hear an informed and energized speaker, and so on until one day you made the commitment to volunteer for a candidate, work for a cause, join the League or take some other action?

When did you realize that, as the League saying goes, democracy is not a spectator sport?

Four weeks ago, I had the good fortune to participate in a dialogue about political choices and actions with a group of Iowa State University students - 60 young adults beginning to discover which, if any, routes were the ones that would move them from the sidelines onto the playing field.

*(Continued on page 2)*

### LWV Issues Briefing

The LWV Issues Briefing will be from **10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 24**, at the Altoona Public Library. Cost is \$11 in advance, \$13 at the door. Lunch is included.

Our new lobbyist, Amy Campbell, has set up the following program:

- Predatory Lending - Lana Ross, Iowa Association of Community Action Agencies
- Post-Election Audits
- Mental Health - Rep. Beth Wessel-Kroeschell, Linda Hinton of the Iowa State Assoc of counties, Rep. Lise Heddens for System Improvement
- Sentencing Reform Update

*One Note* -- If possible, please bring one dozen of your favorite cookies or bars to share for morning snack and lunch dessert. They can be home made or purchased - we will love them all.

Please send your registrations to Joan Racki, 9008 Iltis Dr. Urbandale, IA 50322

### Mark Your Calendar for October and Beyond

<b>October 15</b>	<b>General Meeting Water Quality 7:30 p.m. Northminster Presbyterian Church Fireplace Rm. 1416 20th Street</b>
<b>October 24</b>	<b>Fall Issues Workshop 10 a.m.—3 p.m. Altoona Public Library 700 8th St., SW Altoona</b>
<b>October 26</b>	<b>Ames City Council Candidate's forum 7 p.m. Ames City Council Chambers 515 Clark Ave.</b>
<b>November 5</b>	<b>Board Meeting 5:30 p.m. Ames City Hall</b>

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Dianne Bystrom, director of the Carrie Chapman Catt Center for Women and Politics at ISU and League member, had invited women from four different groups involved in the political process to speak to her “Women and Politics” class. About 15 of the 60 students were males.

Ames residents Liz Beck and Jan Bauer represented the YWCA Ames-ISU and the Story County Democrats, respectively. Beck is current interim director of the Y and a member of the City of Ames Planning and Zoning Commission. Bauer is long-time co chair of our local Democrats. Former teacher and current head of the Polk County Republicans Mary Ann Spicer filled the third spot. I was there representing the League of Women Voters.

Each of us was given about 10 minutes to provide some background on our organizations, offer insight into how we became involved, and talk about what role women played in the various organizations.

When the students started asking questions, several of those were directed to Mary Ann. They wanted to know how she, a black woman who was born into a family with very strong ties to the Democratic Party, decided at age 18 to become a Republican. They wanted to know why she stayed involved in an organization that at the local level as recently as the 1990s, in her own words, was “keeping the women in the background, having them bake pies for fundraisers.”

They wanted to know how she, and to a bit lesser degree, Jan, knew when they had found their place in the political arena.

Liz and I weren’t included in those lines of questioning.

The students were sincerely listening when Liz spoke about the YWCA’s start as a group offering safe and affordable housing for females and its growth into a leader in race relations and empowerment programs for women.

They smiled, laughed and uttered a couple of soft “wows” as I read a list of civic improvements our local league had studied and championed over the years, and as I discussed the voter education and advocacy work we do now.

But Liz and I were, in their minds, talking a lot about past happenings and measured activism, and not enough

about the partisan edge to the big issues of the hour. Many of the students didn’t seem to be mentally ready to participate in the activities that occupy our group’s time today like candidate forums, months of study on a single topic, and lobby days at the state capitol. They identified more with the stories of Mary Ann and Jan.

Experiences like this don’t mean we should stop trying to reach out and recruit young adults into the League at all levels. I think it means just the opposite. We should look for every opportunity to make the young adults in our community – not just students – aware that the League could very well be the best route into the arena for them.

This month, let each of us tell at least one young adult about the wonderful work of the League. They may not join today, but we can set the stage for tomorrow.

*Submitted by Lauris Olson,, Ames LWV President*

## Honoring Judie Hoffman

You are invited to a luncheon to honor Judie Hoffman and her service as our LWVIA Lobbyist. It will be held Monday, October 19, at 11:30 a.m. at Legends American Grill, 2902 South Center Street, Marshalltown. The phone number is 641-752-1237.

The restaurant is located on Hwy 14, also known as So Center Street in Marshalltown. It is in the Wal-Mart parking lot, on the east side of the street. Across the street is a Ford dealership and an auto parts store.

If you plan to attend please reply to Jan Beran [gberan@iowastate.edu](mailto:gberan@iowastate.edu) or Jo Ann Finkenbinder [jo2@cfu.net](mailto:jo2@cfu.net) You may leave a phone message at Jo Ann's phone at 319-266-7756 if you prefer.

We need to know if you plan to attend by October 16.

*Thank you,  
Jo Ann Finkenbinder and Jan Beran*

## Membership Report

The Ames League of Women Voters has begun its year with programs that have been well attended by both guests and members. Guests are membership opportunities. So we are encouraging all members planning to attend the October General Meeting to invite a friend to come with you. Who knows, you may have brought a future League membership chairman or president!

The League would like to welcome the following new members: Gretchen Mosher (Marshalltown), Jack Powell (Ames), and Barbara Brodie (Ames). We look forward to meeting you at future meetings and activities of the League.

*Submitted by Barbara Gwiasda and Angie Shirk*

## Looking for volunteers!

If you would like to help address envelopes for the fundraiser letter, please contact Jean Prestemon at 292-1652. This is scheduled for Thursday, October 22, 9:30—noon, 1902 Northcrest Circle. Addresses will be handwritten on the envelopes. Please give Jean a call!

*Submitted by the Jean Prestemon*

## General Meeting

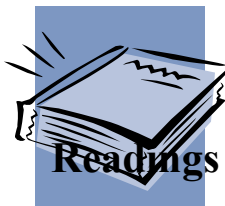
Thursday, October 15, 2009  
 7:30 p.m. (coffee/tea at 7:00-*be green: lug-a-mug!*)  
 Northminster Presbyterian Church, 1416 20<sup>th</sup> Street

Topic: **"Knowing Your Watershed"**

Erv Klaas

Water quality in Squaw Creek ~ good, bad, or somewhere in-between? The Squaw Creek Watershed Coalition has 5 – 6 years of data that will provide an answer. Erv Klaas will talk about the data with an explanation of what it means for us and what we can do to enhance water quality in Squaw Creek in particular, as well as in the Ada Hayden Park area and in our own backyards. Water ~ a resource more precious than gold or oil. Join us for an instructive presentation followed by a thought-provoking discussion .

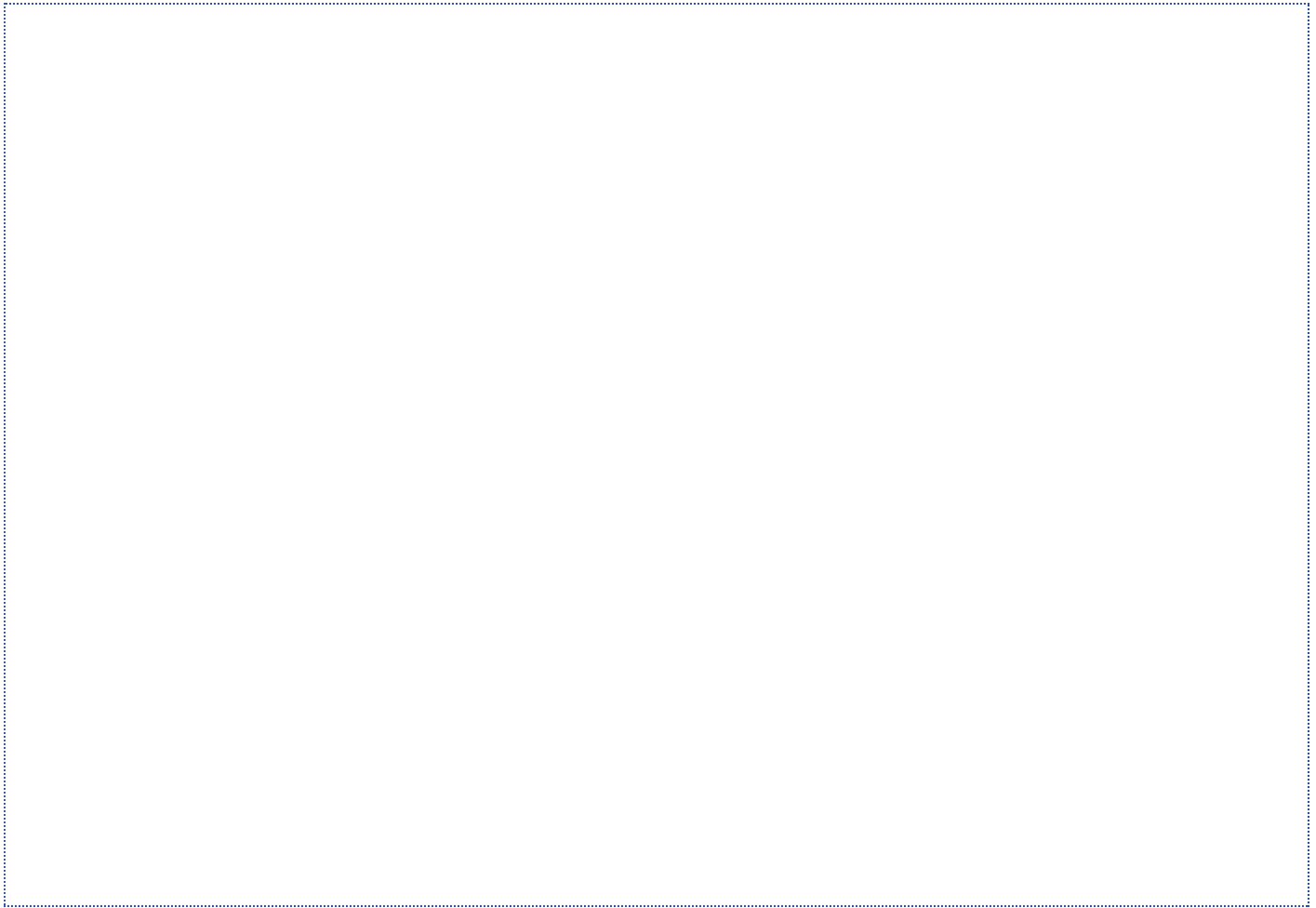
*Submitted by Cheryl Binzen*



## Readings for Oct. and Nov. LWV Book Group

Meetings at 1:30 p.m. on 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday each month

- Oct. 28                    Dead Aid by Dambria Moyo.  
                                  Jan Beran, hostess, 304 W. 24th Street
  
- Nov. 18                   When the Rivers Run Dry by Fred Pearce.  
                                  Marlene Weisshaar, hostess, 1703 Pierce Ct.



League of Women Voters of Ames  
Voter Editor: Renee Jerman

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.