



Calendar 2008-2009

January

Jan. 7, Wed. 4:30 PM. Observer Corps Meeting Caribou Coffee, 855 Randall Rd, South Elgin. Contact league@lwvgenstc.org for information.

Jan. 14, Wed. 7 PM. Board Meeting. General membership invited to attend. For more information, contact league@lwvgenstc.org

Jan. 15, Thurs. 7-8:30 PM Central Kane County Merger Meeting. Discussion on LWV Geneva/St. Charles and Batavia Merger. For more info contact voterservice@lwvgenstc.org

Jan. 16, Fri. 1:30-3:00 PM. MIDD Housing Action Committee. Caribou's Coffee, 855 South Randall Rd., South Elgin. Members welcome to join us. league@lwvgenstc.org

Jan. 16-Feb. 22. *Americans Who Tell the Truth* Exhibit—Geneva History Center. See page 4 of this newsletter.

Jan. 22, Thurs. 6:45-8:15 PM.TLC, Discussion of Inauguration, Panera Bread, 1492 Randall Rd. Geneva, IL.

Jan. 31, Sat. 8:30 AM-3:00 PM Issues and Briefing Workshop, LWVIL. Chicago, IL. Visit www.lwvil.org for more information.

February

Feb. 2, Mon. 7-8:30 PM. Environmental Committee Meeting. Panera Bread, 1492 Randall Rd. Geneva. environmental@lwvgenstc.org

Feb. 14, Sat. 9-11:00 AM. PBIS informational program. Elgin Community College. See article on page 2 in this newsletter.

Feb. 17, Tues. 7 PM. Board Meeting. General membership invited to attend. For more information, contact league@lwvgenstc.org

Feb. 26. Thurs. 12:00-2:00 PM. State of the State Luncheon, LWVIL. Presenter: Carol Marin.

Upcoming

June 12-14. LWVIL Convention. East Peoria, IL.

President's letter

Hello all and welcome to the New Year. A summary follows on what you might have missed the last couple of months and what you won't want to miss coming up in 2009.

Local level: At our November potluck at Carol Holmes our membership came to a consensus on a new name change from LWV Geneva/St. Charles to LWV Central Kane County. We also agreed to move forward with a merger with LWV Batavia. In January our transition team of Janet Safanda, Janet Craft, Tara Schwab, Kim Haag and Jamie Daniel will meet with the Batavia transition reps to start discussions. Check calendar for other upcoming committee meetings and check out the recent committee reports.

State level: In early December I attended a leadership workshop LWVIL organized. Enjoyed meeting and talking with other league leaders to discuss similar challenges. There are opportunities for members to participate in fund-raising activities and a couple of activities in January and February you won't want to miss: Our Issues Briefing and Workshop on January 31st in Chicago and the State of the State Luncheon with speaker Carol Marin on February 26. Also, congratulations to Janet Craft who is the new health care issue specialist for LWVIL.

U.S. level: In December the LWV Kane County League presidents were asked to meet with their new Congressman to acquaint him with League policies and priority action items. Elgin Area, Batavia, Dundee/Carpentersville Area and Geneva/St. Charles presidents have made an appointment in early January with Congressman Bill Foster. Geneva/St. Charles and other Kane County Leagues will jointly submit a request for a proposal funded by the LWV Education Fund, with funding from the Herb Block Foundation for its second phase of its "Citizen Initiative for Transparency." The project is to monitor and advocate for open government at all levels. The first phase of the effort focused on open meetings, and the next phase will deal with open records. (See Observer Mtg. Report).

In closing I'd like to share with you once again some comments we received from our letters to the editor published in various newspapers last month.

...the LWV is a great place for everyone who wants to be part of the solution to our corrupt system. Good government doesn't happen without good people! ...Again excellence to your organization and may you make a difference. ...you got the vote, make sure it is working for you. League of Women Voters is of course open to men.,,

The Board is always interested in hearing your comments and suggestions. Send to league@lwvgenstc.org.

Darlene Bakk, President

Observer Corps LWV Kane County

November 24, 2008 Meeting Notes. Village Squire, South Elgin.
Next mtg. Wed. January 7, 2009, 4:30 pm. Caribou, Randall Rd., Elgin.
Participating: LWV Elgin and LWV Geneva/St. Charles representatives

Overview of Observer Corps: Discussion about LWV Geneva/St. Charles observing of previous Kane County meetings and posting of reports to League web-site, http://www.lwvgenstc.org/observer_corp.html. Hand outs of Kane County 2007 Government Guide from the Clerk's office; calendar of future committee meetings; seating/floor chart of county members at meeting; sample committee agendas with proposed resolutions; financial reports; etc. Discussed monitoring committee report forums and rules for observing (cannot comment the same time you are observing) **Outcome:** Members showed enthusiasm for covering some meetings but requested guidance. It was decided that experienced observers partner with beginners by attending similar meetings as needed. Members to choose which meetings they desire to attend. Kane County meeting times and agendas, cancellations etc. available at:

<http://www.countyofkane.org/Pages/MeetingNotices.aspx>

Priorities and Future Action:

- **Discussion about upcoming Sunshine activities in March 2009 and ways to participate.** (see <http://sunshineweek.org>) Background: *The League has supported Sunshine Week since its inception in 2005. This educational effort aims to raise public awareness about the growing amount of public information that is being withheld at all levels of government. Securing information from government agencies and officials has never been easy, and much of the public is not well informed about the breadth of publicly held information that might affect them, or how to access it.* Taken from Looking for Sunshine: Protecting Your Right to Know-A Resource Guide. LWV. **Outcome:** Based on the link for additional suggested activities in *Looking for Sunshine* document "What Leagues Can Do" (<http://www.lwv.org/AM/Template.cfm?Section=Home&template=/CM/HTMLDisplay.cfm&ContentID=10586>) the group decided to conduct an Open Records Audit--targeted government agencies and records to be discussed. Accompanying forums/contact with media/press conference also to be decided at future meeting.
- **Revive the Observer Corps list serve:** Invitation to those wanting to participate in the list-serve will be sent out. Monitoring forms and links available for group.
- **Apply for an education grant** through the US LWV. See below for description.

EDUCATION FUND League's Government Transparency Work Continues (NEW) Looking ahead, the LWVEF is working on some of our non-election-related issues, including openness in government. We want to give advance notice to League leaders about two important opportunities: (1) Sunshine Week 2009 will be March 15-21, 2009. Sunshine Week is a national initiative to foster a dialogue about the importance of open government and freedom of information. As in recent years, the LWVEF is working with the Sunshine Week coalition. Mark your calendars now and check the Leaders' Update in the coming months for more information, including ideas and materials about how to call attention to this topic during Sunshine Week! 2) The LWVEF has received a grant to undertake Freedom of Information (FOI) audits in 10 communities nationwide this spring. This process of "testing" the open records process has been successfully used by journalists, and the LWVEF is developing a resource kit for Leagues (and other citizen groups) to use when undertaking this important "government check." More information about this project (including an application for Leagues that want to participate) will be announced soon via the Leaders' Update.

Positive Behavior Interventions in Our Public Schools

"How the Whole Child is Being Taught Today"

On February 14, 2009, we will be co-sponsoring an informational event with the LWV Elgin Area. This event will present information on the PBIS program—Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports. We are not promoting the program, just providing information about the program.

This information is from Laurel Bault from LWV Elgin Area: Even without the resources to do it - good things ARE happening in our public schools. Good government starts with good civic education - starting with a positive structure for teaching and modeling for ALL of our children. For more information about this framework see www.pbis.org.

Saturday, February 14--9 a.m. Elgin Community College

JOIN US!!

We invite you to join the League of Women Voters Geneva/St. Charles.

\$60 one-year **Individual Membership**
\$90 one-year **Household Membership** for two members who share address
\$25 one-year **Student Membership**

Make check out to League of Women Voters of Geneva/ St. Charles.
Send to: PO BOX 824, St. Charles, IL 60175.

The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization of women and men, encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues and influences public policy through education.

Pay by PayPal

Pay your dues with Pay Pal. Go to our website <http://www.lwvgenstc.org/join.html> Go to the bottom of the page and click the amount you wish to pay. This is for both new and renewal memberships. You do not need to have a PayPal account in order to utilize PayPal.

**Inauguration Day—January 20, 2009
Celebrate our Democracy!!**

The American presidential inauguration occurs every four years and invites a spectacular amount of fanfare. The new president gets his own day of feasting, procession, statesmanship and celebration. The United States marks its transition of government with a day of events that have developed over time to become our modern-day inauguration. The theme for the 2009 Inauguration of Barack Obama is “A New Birth of Freedom” which honors the bicentennial of Abraham Lincoln’s birth.

The first president, George Washington, was inaugurated at Federal Hall in New York on April 30, 1789. Washington repeated the oath, read by Chancellor Robert Livingston of New York, with one hand on the Bible: “I do solemnly swear that I will faithfully execute the office of the President of the United States and will, to the best of my ability, preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution of the United States.”

<http://www.presidential-inauguration.com/>

**View on Pennsylvania Avenue, Washington,
Monday, March 4th, 1861—Mr. Lincoln,
Accompanied by President Buchanan, on His Way
to the Capitol to Be Inaugurated.**
<http://www.senate.gov/artandhistory>



**Letter to Editor by Darlene Bakk
December 8, 2008**

Re: League of Women Voters marks Bill of Rights Day: Calls for Continued Protection of Civil Liberties

The League of Women Voters of Geneva/St. Charles marked the 218th anniversary of the signing of the Bill of Rights with a call for civic vigilance and participation in our local municipalities.

For 88 years, the League has worked to defend civil liberties and promote citizen engagement in democracy, and we continue this emphasis today. It is particularly important for Americans, especially all those who voted for the first time during this historic election season, to recognize the critical importance of protecting and honoring our most cherished constitutional rights.

Throughout the year, League members work in our community to protect our liberties and make the most of them by encouraging voting, discussing important issues, and holding elected officials accountable for their actions. In the last few months our league has held candidate forums; provided e-slate training for seniors; assisted high school students in a mock election; registered voters; published an on-line voters’ guide; and established an observer corps to monitor county government.

The Bill of Rights is not only an important part of our nation’s history, but also a living document that will guide us into the future.

Join us in making democracy work! Visit www.lwvgenstc.org for more information.

**Letter to Editor by Darlene Bakk
December 12, 2008**

I am writing in response to the comments generated by your December 8th article: “Geneva Reconsiders Affordable Housing” and Alderman Ron Singer’s attempt to establish a housing commission.

As stated, the commission would attempt to insure that a certain level of affordable housing be available in Geneva as part of a sensible planning process.

The League of Women Voters of Geneva/St. Charles believes that affordable housing is a local problem that requires a local solution and has been supporting governmental and community efforts to ensure affordable, safe, and decent housing for the citizens of our towns since 2004.

It is a misconception that taxes would have to be raised to begin focusing on affordable housing issues. We encourage elected officials at both the county and municipal level to explore creative ways to expand the supply of housing for citizens at every income level, from those holding down service jobs to seniors living on fixed incomes to persons with disabilities.

The League would like to thank Alderman Singer for his willingness to advocate for what is necessary and right for the community

**Welcome new member:
Bob Brill of Elburn**

**AMERICANS WHO TELL THE TRUTH EXHIBIT
January 16 through February 22, 2009**

The Geneva History Center will be hosting the traveling exhibit *Americans Who Tell the Truth*, by artist Robert Shetterly from January 16-February 22, 2009. This exhibition is a nonpartisan examination of Americans past and present who have had the courage to stand up for their beliefs in the face of adverse circumstances. The Geneva History Center has selected 26 of the more than 100 portraits offered by Shetterly for a limited engagement exhibition.

Some of the Americans profiled are Jane Addams, Mother Jones, Studs Terkel, Rosa Parks, Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton.

The Geneva History Center is at 113 S. Third St. in Geneva. See the Geneva History website for more information:

<http://www.genevahistorycenter.org/Truth%20exhibit/americans.pdf>

***Action – Legislative Interviews
Janet Craft, Action Chair***

It's time to plan for visits to our Illinois state legislators in early spring. The primary purpose is to build relationships and keep communications open. The interviews give an opportunity to express appreciation for past support and outline LWVIL's priorities for the current session.

I enjoy making these visits and find it particularly satisfying to work with legislators over time. Please give me a call at 630-232-9272 or e-mail action@lwvgenstc.org if you want to be included. It is a great way for new members to learn and you will be paired with an experienced leaguer.

Though not a requirement, I strongly recommend the LWVIL Legislative and Issues Briefing on 1/31/08 as preparation for the interviews. Visit www.lwvil.org for more information.

A personal note – I recently agreed to be Health Care Issues Specialist for LWVIL. I am getting up to speed on the progress, or non-progress of the recommendations from the Task Force formed after the passage of the 2004 Health Care Justice Act. For background on League positions and action on Health Care and other issues, sign on to www.lwvil.org, then Issues and Action.

Environmental Meeting December 11, 2008

by Kimberley Haag, Chair

Present: Linda Robertson, Janet Safanda, Martha Ryan, Diana Skipworth, Bob Brill, Kimberley Haag

Members present summarized what we have considered over the past months we have met. We are committed at this time to offer education to the general public and League members regarding environmental issues.

New information discussed today:

Linda talked about the request from Jim Kirkhoff who a member of the Batavia Environmental Commission. He is convening a meeting in late January or February 2009 of groups that are concerned about environmental issues in Kane County. The purpose of this meeting would be to share goals of each group so that we are able to coordinate and collaborate on programs. We think this would be a good program for us to attend.

Bob brought up the DuPage program SCARCE: School and Community Assistance for Recycling & Composting Education, which is a program in DuPage County. Their mission is: inspiring people, through education to preserve and care for the earth's natural resources while working to build sustainable communities. This is a very active group, and we are interested in getting some information from them and what they do. It is subsidized by the DuPage County Board.

Kim reported that the LWVUS has a climate change task force that was instituted in 2007. (See the following for more information: http://www.lwv.org/AM/Template.cfm?Section=Climate_Change_Task_Force) The LWVUS has designated climate change as a priority for advocacy. This is a logical umbrella for our committee and guide as we pursue activities. Kim also reported that the Kane County Board has changed the Solid Waste Committee into an Energy and Environmental Committee. The new head of this committee is Thomas Van Cleave of Batavia.

Members present have determined that we would like to have four presentations per calendar year on various environmental issues. These would be directed presentations about a specific topic. For our first topic, which would be at the end of February or beginning of March, 2009, we will ask Thomas Van Cleave and/or other members of the new Kane County Board Energy and Environmental Committee to talk about the mission and vision of this new committee and what it will mean for the residents of Kane County. Kim will contact Mr. Van Cleave. Linda will contact possible venues. Venues discussed: Geneva Unitarian Church, Fox Valley Presbyterian Church, Geneva History Center, Geneva Senior Center or possibly Batavia Library or Batavia Congregational Church.

Our next meeting is schedule for Tuesday, February 2, 2009, although we will communicate as plans for the presentation move forward.

Please contact me for more information: Kim Haag at: environmental@lwvgenstc.org or 630-365-2138.

For questions/comments about this newsletter, contact Kimberley Haag, Voter Editor at: editor@lwvgenstc.org