



EVENTS

November 4 1:00 p.m., Voter Service Mtg. at the home of Martha Ryan. For more information contact voterservice@lwvgenstc.org

November 9, 7:00 pm, Presentation on Education Funding in Illinois, by Ralph Martire, Executive Director of the Illinois Center for Tax and Budget Accountability, Geneva Public Library (see article on p. 3. For more information, contact education@lwvgenstc.org

November 11, 7:00 pm **Affordable** Housing Month Public Forum, Housing Action Committee of Illinois, Geneva Public Library. See flyer in this issue.

November 16, 4:15 pm. Environmental Committee Meeting. Arcadium Coffee House, St. Charles. For more information contact environmental@lwvgenstc.org

November 17, 7 pm. Board Meeting. Home of Maureen McKeough. All members welcome to attend. For more information contact president@lwvgenstc.org

December 7 Holiday Party 7 p.m. Enticing Cuisine, 12 S. Water Street, Batavia. Invitations will arrive soon.

Dec 17, Thursday, 7:00-9:00 pm, Board Meeting, location TBA. All are welcome to attend. Contact president@lwvgenstc.org for more information.

January 18, 2010, Monday evening. Congressional Forum for Federal District 14. Norris Center, St. Charles. Co-sponsored LWV Elgin Area, Geneva/St. Charles and Batavia.

February 2, 2010. Primary Election. VOTE!

February 6, 2010. LWVIL Issues Briefing, University Center, Chicago

February 14, 2010. 90th Anniversary Founding of League of Women Voters in Chicago

June 11-14 2010. LWVUS Convention, Atlanta, GA

SAVE THE DATE!!

HOLIDAY PARTY AND FUNDRAISER

December 7, 2009, 7:00 p.m.

Enticing Cuisine
12 S. Water Street
Batavia, Illinois

Appetizers and a Selection of Holiday Wines

Holiday Music and Good Company

\$30 per person – includes \$10 donation to Education Fund

President's Report Voter Nov/Dec 2009

League Speaks Out

We spoke out this fall on League issues in a variety of ways: the FOIA Forum, TLC discussions on health care and tax reform, letters, calls to legislators and press, a portable Energy display. LWV Geneva-St. Charles, Batavia and Elgin Area letter on Campaign Finance Reform went out in the last days of the IL veto session. In the November calendar, community meetings are scheduled on two more of "our" issues, Tax Reform and Affordable Housing Options for persons with disabilities. And, we look forward to giving candidates their say before the February 2 Primary Election. Watch the calendar for Voter Service events.

Complete Census Count

At a recent LWVIL Leaders Rap Chris Pakan and I attended, there was a presentation on the Illinois Complete Count Committee. Governor Quinn selected LWVIL as the lead agency for this effort to work with a broad segment of the community to ensure that Illinois is fully counted. The census data determines the number of congressional seats, and determines disposition of \$400 billion to state, local and tribal governments. Chris will be looking into the status of planning for a true census count in our area.

National Health Care Reform

Visit the Lwv.org home page to view LWVUS President Mary Wilson's TV spot on "Health Care Lies." LWVUS has volunteers from the D. C. area lobbying congress. Recently they visited over 100 Members of Congress in 2 weeks, including the offices of Senators Durbin and Burrell, promoting League's support of HR 3200 with a strong public option.

Holiday Party and Fund Raiser

In December no meetings scheduled! Join members and friends of LWV Batavia and LWV Geneva-St. Charles at Enticing Cuisine in Batavia, December 7, 7 p.m. FYI – the Merger process of the two leagues is moving along; Committee meets in January.

Special thanks to Tara Schwab for this issue of the *Voter*

Looking forward to the November programs. See you at the Party in December! *Janet Craft, Co-President*

Please Join Us

- \$60 one-year **Individual Membership**
- \$90 one-year **Household Membership** for two members who share an 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. Or pay 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 Pay Pal account in order to utilize Pay Pal.

Public Option Needed in Health Care Fix

Letter to the Editor: Daily Herald 10/18/09, Kane County Chronicle 10/20/09

As the national health care reform debate works its way through the legislative process, we are concerned that all Americans have the choice of a quality, affordable public insurance plan. A public option is key to true health reform, providing consumer choice and lowering costs.

The current health care system is dangerous to both our economy and our health. We must reduce the costs of health care for individuals, businesses and communities. Cost containment measures must be consistent with the overall goal of universal coverage; data on benefits and health outcomes must be made publicly available.

We urge our members of Congress, Sen. Richard Durbin, Sen. Roland Burris and Rep. Bill Foster to demonstrate leadership for true health care reform.

Janet S. Craft, Kimberley Haag League of Women Voters Geneva-St. Charles
Susan S. Russo, LWV - Batavia
Sigi Psimenos, LWV - Elgin Area

Campaign Finance Reform written by Janet Craft

The following letter to the editor from Elgin Area, Batavia and Geneva/St. Charles LWV should be appearing in our local papers. We are including it in this Voter prior to its printing to encourage you to contact your representative.

The League of Women Voters supports open and honest elections with full participation of citizens in the political process. Financing of political campaigns is problematic in our state. A Campaign Reform bill that did not do the job was vetoed by Governor Quinn in August. The Governor and legislative leaders pledged genuine reform and have a bill ready for the October

Veto Session.

There is one large resounding barrier to true reform in this bill: legislative leaders are refusing to limit the amount political parties and caucuses can contribute. This means:

- Party leaders can continue to give literally millions of dollars to candidates and incumbents
- The voices of those who cannot afford large contributions will still not be heard
- Good new candidates will continue to be under the control of the leaders who fund them rather than the constituents who elect them.

Speak out against corruption for real reform!

Call the CHANGE Illinois Hotline 1-800-719-3020

Tell your state senator and state representative we need meaningful Campaign Contribution limits that include contributions from political parties and legislative leaders' caucuses.

*For questions or comments about this newsletter, please
contact editor@lwvgenstc.org*

Voices for Children Forum by Jean Pierce

The state's budget crisis has put human services at risk for fulfilling their missions. Though our schools are primarily financed through property taxes, they have suffered from state funding that was "too little, too late." That was the message from the September 30 forum sponsored by Voices for Children at the St. Charles Public Library. Kelly Talbot, from Voices for Children, presented an overview of how budget cuts have affected services that had been provided throughout the state. Jim Otepka and Linda Healy focused respectively on the blows absorbed by Tri City Family Services and Mutual Ground. Representing local school districts, Jeff Schuler from Kaneland and Pam Turiff from St. Charles reported on programs and personnel affected by delays and cuts in state funding for the schools. The audience generally expressed understanding of the problem and support for the human services and educational institutions represented. Kelly Talbot briefly described how HB174 would address the problems by changing the tax structure in Illinois.

League-Sponsored Community Forum: Tax Reform for Illinois

On November 9 at 7 pm at the Geneva Public Library, 127 James, Geneva, Ralph Martire, Executive Director of the Center for Tax and Budget Accountability, will present the case for HB174, which would change the tax structure in Illinois. Long an advocate for a more progressive tax structure and less reliance on property taxes for funding education, Martire is warning that the state is facing a catastrophic budget crisis. Faced with a deficit half as large as its operating budget, the state can no longer consider solving a problem of this magnitude by borrowing, delaying payment, or trimming the budget.

The FY10 state budget which was passed this year provided deep spending cuts threatening human services and education. These cuts resulted in the loss of jobs as well as less funding to public and mental health programs and education. Legislators who refuse to consider tax increases are not admitting that we are already paying far more than we should in "hidden" costs: 1) Inadequate treatment of mental health results in higher rates of incarceration. 2) This requires the state to prioritize paying for its prisons instead of schools in districts with lower property values. 3) As a result of the state's over-dependence on property taxes to fund education, and cuts in state assistance for districts with lower property values, Illinois has the greatest discrepancy between districts in per pupil spending of any other state. 4) Accordingly, those districts have greater numbers of people who are out of work, ill-informed about health care, and more likely to be incarcerated. 5) We pay more to hospitals in order to cover the costs of people who get their primary health care from emergency rooms 8) we pay higher taxes to compensate for the large number of unemployed people. 9) We are paying the costs of living in a violent society.

The Illinois League of Women Voters has formed a coalition with Martire's group, since the solutions he advocates reflect the state league's positions: "The State should assume the major responsibility for funding public schools and guarantee an adequate level of financial support... State funding levels should be sufficient to enable districts to provide for all students an education that meets both standards established by the State Board of Education and legislated mandates. The distribution of state funds to public elementary and secondary schools should reduce financial disparities between districts and increase equity for students and for taxpayers. The State should concentrate its efforts on raising the level of the financial resources of poorer districts. The League strongly supports reduced reliance on local property taxes to fund schools and believes that the State should assume the major responsibility for funding public education. The income tax (preferably at a graduated rate) provides the most productive and equitable source of revenue for schools."

Freedom of Information Forum written by Kimberley Haag

The League of Women Voters of Geneva/St. Charles, Elgin Area and Batavia wrapped up their transparency audit with a presentation of their findings on Saturday, October 10, 2009, at the Gail Borden Library in Elgin. Guest speakers Maryam Judar from the Citizen Advocacy Center in Elmhurst and Mark O. Stern a lawyer who resides in Wheaton also made presentations.

The Leagues were one group of 14 in the United States that were awarded a \$400 grant from the League of Women Voters of the United States to conduct a Freedom of Information audit. This was part of the US League's *Citizen Initiative for Transparency* project designed to monitor and advocate for open government at all levels. The purpose was to assess how well federal, state and local freedom of information laws are administered and to show if there are barriers for citizens who desire to use the state's open record laws to access public information. The results of the study can be found at www.lwvgenstc.org/files/kane_county_foia_audit_2009_final.pdf

Maryam Judar spoke about the new Freedom of Information Act that will go into effect in Illinois on January 1, 2010. Mark Stern spoke of his attempts to access the salary and compensation records for the school superintendent in the Wheaton/Warrenville School District. Mr. Stern's case to obtain these documents went all the way to the Illinois Supreme Court and resulted in a ruling that specifies that records such as these are subject to FOIA statutes and may not be considered as part of the confidential file.

The new FOIA in Illinois (5 ILCS 140/1 et seq) can be found at:

www.ilga.gov/legislation/ilcs/ilcs3.asp?ActID=85&ChapAct=5%26nbsp%3BILCS%26nbsp%3B140%2F&ChapterID=2&ChapterName=GENERAL+PROVISIONS&ActName=Freedom+of+Information+Act.

*Please join us for an
Affordable Housing Month Public Forum*

**Creating More
Community Living Options for
People with Disabilities
in Kane County**

Nationally and in Kane County, people with developmental disabilities and mental health issues face a significant shortage of affordable housing that meets their needs for supportive services.

Come to this public forum to find out more about the housing resources that are currently available for people with disabilities in Kane County and to discuss what can be done to create more of this type of housing.

Wednesday, November 11
6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.
Geneva Public Library
127 James Street

Sponsored by:

Advocates Network of Kane and Kendall Counties
Association for Individual Development
Day One Network
Ecker Center for Mental Health
FITE Center for Independent Living
Housing Action Illinois
League of Women Voters of Geneva-St. Charles
Prairie State Legal Services

For more information contact: Bob Palmer at
Housing Action Illinois, 312-939-6074 x. 206 or
bob@housingactionil.org.

Towns Should Learn About Wind Energy.

Letter to the Editor, Daily Herald, Kane County Chronicle, St. Charles Sun (Sept/Oct 2009)

To the mayors and members of the city councils of Geneva and Batavia:

The League of Women Voters of Geneva/St. Charles and the League of Women Voters of Batavia urge you to attend the Northern Illinois Municipal Power Authority's (nimpa.us) annual meeting and open house on Oct. 7 in Rochelle, particularly the presentation of the Eagle View project at 7 p.m. that is directed to elected officials.

The League of Women Voters believes that global climate change is one of the most serious threats to the environment, health and economy of our nation. Therefore, we urge government to seek ways to reduce our carbon footprint. Through NIMPA, the city of Batavia, the city of Geneva and the city of Rochelle have taken a positive first step in researching and developing the Eagle View wind energy and investment opportunity for our communities. Thank you.

We now ask that you become fully informed about this project and other renewable options available to provide the citizens of your towns with effective and environmentally friendly electrical energy.

The Eagle View Wind Project would be an opportunity for Batavia, Geneva and Rochelle to have an ownership interest in the generation of electricity through wind. The project would be located in Rochelle and consist of eight turbines generating 12 megawatts of power. Each city will have the opportunity at a later date to decide if they would like to participate. The details of this project, including construction costs, financing arrangements and financial impact on citizens' utility bills, will be discussed at the open house and presentation to elected officials.

Susan Russo, President, League of Women Voters Batavia

Janet S. Craft, Kimberley Haag Co-presidents, League of Women Voters Geneva/St. Charles

From the Environmental Committee by Linda Robertson

The environmental committee is a tri-cities committee composed of members of Batavia and Geneva/St. Charles League of Women Voters. Interested members from both Leagues are invited to join.

Mission Statement:

Recognizing the threat of carbon emissions to our planet, this committee strives to contribute to the sustainability of Earth by promoting energy efficiency, energy conservation, and energy innovation in our local communities.

Activities

Environmental Committee members: Ann Dover, Kim Haag, Betsy Thelin Zinser and Linda Robertson attended the NIMPA annual meeting and open house on October 7, 2009 in Rochelle, IL. The highlights included presentations on the Eagle View wind turbine project.

An insulation demonstration, with information on R-Values and 2009 tax credits, was presented at the Geneva Town Hall meeting on October 21, 2009. Environmental committee members Carrie Carter, Kim Haag, Janet Safanda, Betsy Thelin Zinser and Linda Robertson answered numerous questions about the demonstration. Tom Carter, LWV member, was one of the featured speakers at the town hall and talked about why reducing our green house gas emissions is important.

Next committee meeting will be held November 16, 4:15 at Arcadium Cafe in St. Charles.

TAX REFORM FOR ILLINOIS: THE CASE FOR HB 174

Speaker: Ralph Martire
Center for Tax and Budget Accountability

Monday, November 9, 7 pm
Geneva Public Library
127 James Street,
Geneva, IL

Illinois is confronting a fiscal crisis. The current (FY10) state budget has only cut spending, which has cut jobs and services. The over-reliance on property taxes to fund education is not working.

2) Summary of HB 174:

We need a comprehensive, balanced solution that raises more adequate revenues, updates our revenue system and treats families more fairly. House Bill 174 would:

- Raise at least \$5 billion in new and desperately needed state resources
- Increase the state's personal and corporate income tax rates to at least 5 percent each, the first such increases in 20 years
- Expand the state's sales tax base to include more services, which are the fastest-growing portion of our economy.
- Provide meaningful tax relief for families.
- Significantly grow the Illinois Earned Income Tax Credit for low-income, working families.
- Increase the state's property tax credit for homeowners.
- Grow the state's standard exemption, helping all taxpayer
- Preserve important state priorities for kids and families.
- Raise funds that are necessary to protect many vital health and human services from deep budget cuts or even elimination
- Commit a portion of new revenues to strengthening kids' learning.

3) LWVIL position: The State should assume the major responsibility for Funding Public Schools and Guarantee an adequate level of financial support.