



League of Women Voters®

Spring 2008

# ***THE BATAVIA VOTER***

## **President's Message**

Hannah Volk and I had the wonderful opportunity to attend the LWVIL State of the State Luncheon at the Union League Club in January. It was very enlightening to hear about the league's long history in being involved in environmental issues. In February, our monthly meeting speakers were Anne Drover and Betsy Zinser of BCEC (Batavians Concerned about Energy Conservation). Two very committed women to this important cause.

I would like to thank everyone who took part in the monumental effort of the two Candidates Forums in January. When we initially decided to use the Norris Center for the 14th Congressional Forum, I never thought we would begin to see the numbers who actually attended show up. Over 500 people attended! Barbara King did a tremendous job in handling the job of Moderator. Janet Safanda of the Geneva/St. Charles League and her team were integral in getting the entire project off the ground. Many thanks to all of you in helping with the forums. We are already in the planning stages for the forums to be held before the fall elections. Please contact me should you want to help in the forum planning.

We are also in the planning stages for our programs and events for next year. We always want to hear from you all about things that you would like our local league to address that fall within the purview of the LWV mission. Please join us at our annual meeting on April 28<sup>th</sup> to celebrate the past year and plan for the future. *Patti*

Batavia League of Women Voters  
PO Box 611  
Batavia, IL 60510

Check out our  
website at  
[www.lwvbatavia.org](http://www.lwvbatavia.org)

## Opportunities and Crossroads

Throughout the year, the Batavia chapter of the LWV has provided the community and the Fox Valley with opportunities to participate in the political process such as the 14<sup>th</sup> US Congressional District Primary Election, as well as opportunities to become better informed and helpful citizens through the Annual Volunteer Fair and BCEC presentation on clean energy. These programs are successful in large part because of the work of a small number of members.

Monthly executive board discussions center on who will take up the next set of tasks to keep the chapter active and visible in the community. There is sayings that if you want things done, ask busy people – they understand how to organize, implement and meet deadlines. This is as true in the Batavia League of Women Voters as in most organizations. The busy people of our group have worked hard over the past several years to maintain the integrity of the chapter, to stay visible and to have a voice in community affairs. Unfortunately the hard work of a few people has not been enough. The chapter finds itself at the close of this year with a stagnant membership roster, low program attendance and difficulty meeting the requirements of keeping current and accurate records, setting program agendas, working with other chapters and being active with state and national issues.

Recognizing those challenges and seeking ways to keep the chapter viable, the executive board created an exploratory committee during 2007 to investigate expanding our membership and community voice with the members of the Geneva-St. Charles chapter. Susan Russo, Debbie Prebys and I met with representatives of our League neighbors to discuss such an expansion. We discovered in our talks that they are experiencing some of the same challenges. We discovered that we have more in common than what we had first thought was dis-similar. We agreed that the League has value and provides a community service unlike other organizations. We believe that the League should have a prominent place in the activities of our area, but recognize that our voice is not as strong as we would like it to be.

One of the gratifying parts of being involved in the League is the recognition that we are all interested in the world around us, that we all have taken roles as leaders whether in our workplace, church, neighborhood or other organization. We are critical thinkers and problem solvers. We get things done.

Joining the members of the Geneva – St. Charles group, does not mean that Batavia will lose its identity. What Batavia has done for its community will not be forgotten or lost by an expansion. Batavia-centered issues as with all local issues may be addressed in the same way they have always been through committee work and local studies.

In thinking about where the League has spent its time recently, our issues have been more regional in scope as we have studied mental health, affordable housing, our new county prison, suicide prevention and others.

The Batavia chapter of the League of Women Voters is at a crossroads. In order to continue our history of success, and to be a strong voice for citizens, we need to make some changes. If the work of our chapter is going continue it a meaningful way, we need to look outward. We honor our past by moving forward and by working together, we learn and we grow.

Joining with the Geneva-St. Charles LWV members will be on the agenda at our annual meeting on April 28. Please feel free to call or email Susan, Debbie or I with any questions or concerns. We look forward to bringing this exciting opportunity for growth and development to you.

*Lynn Elam*  
[LMElam@gmail.com](mailto:LMElam@gmail.com)

## Kane County Mental Health Council

Kim Haag, of the Geneva-St. Charles LWV has been involved with the Mental Health Council Data Committee. With the support of the Kane County Mental Health Council, this committee is working on a survey that will be sent to all community mental health organizations that serve uninsured and underinsured consumers and that receive public funds for at least part of their operating expenses. This will be a comprehensive survey which will detail the types of treatment provided by the agencies, how many persons treated and the existing needs of the agencies. This is a positive step in addressing the fragmentation of services documented not only in our study, but also in the IPLAN process.

**Outreach:** Buzz Hayes (Batavia LWV) spoke to Judge Sheldon about the leagues MIDD Study. Judge Sheldon oversees Kane County's new Mental Health Court. Recently one person has graduated from the 2-year program.

**Legislative/Outreach:** Gina Richter (Geneva-St. Charles) met with Linda Chapa La Via, Ruth Munson, and Lilia Tenity (State of IL DD head). Linda read thru our published study material and said she was concerned with services lacking. She wanted to know what she can do to "light a fire" under county board. Jerry Murphy (708 Mental Health Board) also attended this meeting.

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### Dues are Due!

**Dues for the 2008-2009 year are due by June 1<sup>st</sup>.**

- \$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 Batavia  
Send to: PO BOX 611, Batavia, IL 60510

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.

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## National News

### ***Let's Celebrate! LWV is 88 years old!***

The League of Women Voters was founded by Carrie Chapman Catt, feminist and leader in the suffragist movement, in February, 1920. Its mission was the political education of new women voters. Six months later the 19th amendment to the U.S. Constitution was ratified, giving women the right to vote.

The League began as a "mighty political experiment" designed to help 20 million women carry out their new responsibilities as voters. It encouraged them to use their new power to participate in shaping public policy. From the beginning, the League was an activist, grassroots organization whose leaders believed that citizens should play a critical role in advocacy. It was then, and is now, a nonpartisan organization. League founders believed that maintaining a nonpartisan stance would protect the fledgling organization from becoming mired in the party politics of the day. However, League members were encouraged to be political themselves, by educating citizens about, and lobbying for, government and social reform legislation. This holds true today. The League is proud to be nonpartisan, neither supporting nor opposing candidates or political parties at any level of government, but always working on vital issues of concern to members and the public. The League has a long, rich history that continues with each passing year.



## 2008 LWVIL ISSUES BRIEFING

The Illinois League's Annual Issues Briefing was held on February 23. The morning program featured a discussion on **The Pros and Cons of Having a Constitutional Convention**. Illinois voters will vote on this issue in the General Election on November 4, 2008.

In addition to discussing the advisability of a Constitutional convention, protecting our civil liberties was a hot topic. Your Representative in Congress needs to be encouraged to keep protecting America's basic civil liberties against the administration's fear tactics. The administration wants to continue warrantless wiretapping of American citizens and to let telecommunications companies off the hook for possible illegal eavesdropping.

The afternoon session of the Briefing offered a choice of three workshops: **Education Funding, Immigration, and Global Warming**. Reports on other issues of special interest to the League members are available on the LWVIL website. Available reports include:

- Campaign Finance Reform
- Children's Services
- Criminal Justice
- Death Penalty Abolition
- Election Laws
- Fiscal Policy
- Gun Violence Prevention
- Special Report on Illinois Courts
- Immigration
- Judicial Evaluation Commission
- Mental Health
- Natural Resources
- Omnibus Elections Bill
- Show Us Amendment
- Social Policy

Go to [www.lwvil.org](http://www.lwvil.org) for more information.



## Batavia League of Women Voters

### Annual Meeting

**Date:** Monday, April 28, 2008  
**Place:** Tribella Bar and Grill  
1900 Mill Street, Batavia  
**Time:** 6:00: cocktails  
6:30: annual meeting  
7:15: dinner  
**Menu:** Chicken Saltimbocca, salad, dessert  
**Cost:** \$25  
**RSVP:** [prebys@juno.com](mailto:prebys@juno.com) or (630)879-9885