



League of Women Voters®

Winter 2008

PO Box 611
Batavia, IL 60510
www.lwvbatavia.org

THE BATAVIA VOTER

President's Message

Happy Holidays to all of you. The **Batavia League of Women Voters** is still up and running and being a valuable asset to our communities.

What an exciting election year! And we were busy, busy, busy.

We did a truly amazing job in registering over 200 voters between August and October 2008 at 18 separate Voter Registration events. Many thanks for your efforts.

I also want to thank all of you who participated in any way on the Candidate Forums we co-hosted with the Geneva- St. Charles league which were held in October. What an amazing group you all are to step up to the plate and assist with these events. While the turnout at the Norris Center for the 14th Congressional forum was not as high in numbers as the January 2008 forum for the same position, I believe we decided there were approximately 150 in attendance. The Norris Center is a perfect place for such an event.

The local forum held at Batavia City Hall was also an eventful evening with candidates from the 49th, 50th, 55th and 95th State Legislative Districts in attendance as well as the candidates for the Kane County Board Chair position. This particular forum was also broadcast live by BATV.

In line with the election, the Batavia League held a session on CON-CON- Our position on changing the Illinois Constitution. This was held at the Batavia Public Library at the end of October and was chaired by our own Vice President- Susan Russo who led an engaging discussion on the topic. We were visited by Mike Fortner, State Legislative Representative from West Chicago who gave his comments on the opposing side of the issue.

Additionally, we again partnered with the Geneva-St. Charles League in providing e slate voter machine training to the elderly. I certainly hope the numbers we trained at the Holmstad this fall were happier with the actual ballot than the sample ballot we used in the training sessions.

We will again be offering voter registration before the spring local elections. There is also the possibility we will host candidate forums for these local positions- Mayor, School Board, etc.

Finally, we partnered with the Batavia Public Library to host the September New Lyceum Series speaker Matthew Streb on "Is This Anyway to Elect a President?." The event was very well attended and got positive reviews.

Have a safe and happy holiday season. We look forward to seeing you on January at the Holiday Potluck.

Patti

Coming Events:

Jan. 10, 2009 5:30pm—9:00pm	Holiday Potluck	Ruth Johnsen's home
Jan. 20, 2009 12:00 noon	Inauguration Day The swearing in of our 44 th president.	
Jan. 31, 2009 8:30am-3:00pm	LWVIL Issues Briefing and Workshop	Chicago, IL
Feb. 23, 2009 7:00pm-9:00pm	General membership meeting	Batavia Public Library
Feb. 26, 2009 12:00 noon	State of the State Luncheon, presenter Carol Marin	Chicago, IL
March 23, 2009 7:00pm-9:00pm	General membership meeting	Batavia Public Library
June 12-14, 2009	LWVIL State Convention	East Peoria

LWV Batavia Holiday Potluck

When: January 10, 2009

Time: 5:30pm-9:00pm

Where: Ruth Johnsen's home

414 Chestnut Batavia, IL

RSVP: 879-6270 or rdjohnsen@msn.com

Spouses and friends are welcome.

An Election Observer's Experience

Susan Russo

November 4, 2008 began at 4:00 a.m. for me and my husband, Daniel. We had volunteered to be a part of the Obama Voter Protection team and were assigned to observe a polling place near downtown Milwaukee, Wisconsin, beginning at 6:30 a.m.

The polling place was in a Milwaukee Public Schools elementary building built in 1929. Only one ward voted at this polling place, so we had an "easier" assignment than those who were assigned polling places with two or more wards.

When we arrived, there were already about ten people in line to vote. Polls in Wisconsin opened at 7:00 a.m. and closed at 8:00 p.m. It was going to be a long day.

The poll workers in Wisconsin are called "Inspectors", and there were nine Inspectors assigned by the City of Milwaukee to this polling place. (In Wisconsin, voting is run by the municipalities, not the counties.) The Chief Inspector was a retired attorney who had several years' experience. I cannot say enough wonderful things about her and the way she set up and managed the polling place. The other Inspectors consisted of one City of Milwaukee employee (who was given the option of working at the polls in lieu of her regular job for the day), one retired UW-Milwaukee professor, two elderly but feisty sisters of Irish descent, another retired attorney, and three involved citizens.

When the polls opened there were about 35 people in line. In Wisconsin, a voter can register on election day, so one table was set up for registering new voters and another for checking in already-registered voters. Throughout the day, the line never exceeded about 30 voters and there was always at least one voter present. Although voter turnout at this particular polling place appeared to be light (compared to other polling places in Milwaukee), the Inspectors who had worked at this polling place before said that turnout was high—double what it usually had been. Because this polling place was in an area that was a mixture of older residential, industrial (for example, Miller Brewing Company) and commercial properties, it is not surprising that the number of electors in this ward were fewer in number than in a heavily residential ward.

Fairly early in the day, Daniel and I were joined by two observers from the Wisconsin Voter Protection organization. These two women were assigned three polling places to observe, so they came and went several times throughout the day. At about 2:00 p.m., two men arrived from the McCain-Palin Campaign. They stayed until about 3:20 p.m. They, too, were assigned to more than one polling place and said they would return later. They never came back.

Throughout the day, I had to make telephone calls to both the national Obama Campaign and the Wisconsin Obama Campaign contact person assigned to our polling place. During each call I had to answer a series of questions: How many people had already voted? Does the Chief Inspector have enough ballots? Has any voter been challenged? Have you observed any electioneering at the polling place? Etc. Luckily, I had no problems to report at the polling place we were observing.

Assistant District Attorneys from Milwaukee County stopped by the polling place twice to ask some of the same questions. They were actively monitoring polling places to combat voter fraud and disenfranchisement.

About 60% of the voters at this polling place were African-American, 35% were white, and 5% were other minorities, mostly Asian. Some of the voters were clearly Marquette University students. There were priests and ministers. There were homeless men from a nearby shelter. There were single moms with kids in tow. Many of them—very many of them—had never voted before.

Wisconsin uses paper ballots that voters feed into a counting machine. If the ballot is accepted, a pleasant-sounding beep is made by the machine. If the ballot is rejected, the machine starts printing an analysis of why the ballot was rejected. The Chief Inspector then assists the voter with spoiling the ballot and getting him or her a new ballot.

These are some of the memories from that day that are most vivid:

- Six voters showed up at the poll to register and vote without the required address verification documentation. Five of these voters went home, got the necessary documentation and came back to register and then vote.
- The process of registering and voting on the same day was seamless. There appears to be no reason why this is not done in more states.
- At least two electors voted and then went home and came back with friends and family members to make sure they voted.
- One woman (who had brought back a friend to vote) asked how she could be an Inspector at a future election.
- The COUNTLESS number of voters who left the polling place with beaming smiles, pumping fists, and exclamations of joy as the machine accepted their ballots with the pleasant-sounding beep.

When the day began, I was a little regretful that I would not be able to be glued to the radio or Internet throughout the day to get reports on how the election was proceeding. I thought that I would feel distant and apart from this momentous election. Nothing could be further from the truth.

I have fond memories of the well-behaved and cooperative students and staff whose school building we occupied for 15 hours (the volleyball team had a bake sale all day!). The nine Inspectors we spent those 15 hours with seem like friends, although ones we will probably never see again. I have great respect for the way the City of Milwaukee organized the election and made sure the polling place had adequate voting supplies and for the way the Milwaukee County District Attorney's Office checked on polling places to make a concerted effort to combat voter fraud. Most importantly, I have a new perspective on and respect for the voters of the City of Milwaukee themselves. In short, this was one of the best experiences of my life, and I feel more connected to this election and its results than I ever dreamed possible.



Issues Briefing 2009: Saturday, January 31

University Center - Conference Chicago - Lake Room
525 South State Street · Chicago
Registration deadline: Friday, January 16, 2009

Issues Programs

The State of Illinois Government:

- How can Illinois move forward to meet its fiscal challenges?
- What plans does new leadership in the General Assembly have for this legislative session?

The 2010 Census:

- Why is a complete count important?
- What are the implications for Illinois regarding redistricting and services in Illinois?

LWV Advocacy & Front-Burner Issues:

- Updates on State Fiscal Policy, Environmental Protection & Pollution Control, and other action issues.

Workshops (select one)

Environment/Climate Change:

- What is the impact of pharmaceuticals on water quality?
- How can League implement Natural Resources positions, educate the public and promote action?

Judicial Evaluation Commission:

- What is it?
- How will it help the public make decisions to help elect better judges?

Election Issues:

- What voting processes could be improved in Illinois?
- Post Con-Con, what issues can be promoted by amendment; recall, term limits, progressive income tax, initiative and referendum?

[Complete Schedule](#)

[Online Registration](#)

Where We Stand 2007-2009 is the platform of the League of Women Voters of Illinois. It is a companion to *Impact on Issues*, the League of Women Voters of the United States' program book. Taken together, these publications and the *League Principles* form the basis for all action taken by Illinois Leagues on state and national issues. Please make yourself familiar with this document as it is the basis for the Issues Briefing in January and our state convention in June.

Merger Update

The Board and general membership of the Geneva/St. Charles LWV has voted to proceed with the merger of the LWV of Batavia and the LWV of the Geneva/St. Charles Area. A transition team from both leagues has been identified and will begin meeting in January. There are several requirements from the state and national LWV that must be met for the dissolution of the two leagues and merger to be recognized. If you have any questions or input, please contact Debbie Prebys, Susan Russo, or Lynn Elam. We will do our best to keep you thoroughly informed as the process moves forward.

If you have not yet paid your dues, please take a moment and write your check now. Dues for the 2008-2009 year are:

- **\$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

2008-2009 Board of Directors

Patti Lackman, president & voter services chair

Susan Russo, vice president

Lynn Elam, treasurer

Terry Allen, secretary & membership chair

Ruth Johnsen, finance chair

Debbie Prebys, communications chair

Char Kreuz, member at large