



The Chicago Voter

League of Women Voters of Chicago

November/December 2008

Website - www.LWVChicago.org

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Dates To Remember

Meetings held at the League Office Unless otherwise Noted

To check on committee meetings call the office.

December Committee meetings will be held at the call of the chairs and the Office will have the January Schedule As soon as it is available

**Saturday, Jan. 3rd
Program Planning Briefing
10:00 am – 12 noon**

Monday, Jan 5th
Executive committee Call of the President

Monday, Jan. 12th
Board of Directors
5:30 pm

Saturday Jan., 24th
Unit Leaders Meeting
10:00 am – 12 noon

**Saturday, Jan. 31st
LWVIL Issues Briefing**

**LWVIL
State of the State Luncheon
Thursday, February 26, 2009 beginning at noon.
Union League Club**

President's Column

This holiday season has the promise of a good future with a new presidential administration whose philosophy is in harmony with LWV principles and goals in the areas of employment, housing, education, individual rights and care for the environment, just to name a few. The fact that the president-elect and many of his transition team and cabinet members are from the Chicago area and the joyful election-night rally make us feel more than a second city. The two wars siphon a great deal of money from our national funds, a volatile stock market, a home finance crisis, the possible loss of some major corporations all lead to serious job loss. For some Americans the next several months will be difficult. Let's remember to help those in need through the various organizations in our city.

There are issues that we must consider as LWV members: Global Climate Change, Health Care and the National Popular Vote Compact are topics chosen at the LWVUS Convention and will be part of our program. Information on these may be found on the LWVUS website and there are short articles in this *Voter*.

As for the election, there seemed to be fewer problems. Thanks to all who took part in the Pollwatching Project. A report is in this issue. The proposition on a Constitutional Convention was defeated but there are people who may pursue a lawsuit to have another opportunity to vote.

Plans are being made for the **State of the City** luncheon in May and the committee could use your help.

Of course the Chicago League's Annual Meeting will be in June.

We, on the Board of Directors, wish you, our members and your families a very happy Holiday Season.

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Have you paid 2008-2009 dues?
If not, this will be the last Chicago Voter you will receive.
On December 31st, we will drop all non-paid Chicago League names from the list.
You should receive a call in December if your dues are not paid.

Election Roundup

November 4, 2008 was a history making Election Day. In Chicago, 73% of the registered voters cast their ballots. Of those, about 26% took advantage of the early voting opportunity.

The Call for a Constitutional Convention netted: 43% Yes and 57% No votes in Chicago and 33% Yes and 67% No votes statewide. The issue may be heard in the courts since there were some problems with the information which was to have been provided to voters before they cast their ballots.

The League of Women Voters again did Poll-watching at the November Election. Generally speaking fewer problems surfaced during this election except for one glitch in the provision for the material on the Constitutional Convention. Each voter was supposed to receive a handout which corrected the material sent out before the election, but this was not always done, and indeed many voters refused the handout, saying that they did not need it. If a court case determines that the election was in error, there will be another vote called on this issue. The League had opposed the calling of a Constitutional Convention at this time. We worked for the original one.

As has happened in past elections, no seated judge was removed from office, regardless of the material provided to the news media from the various lawyers' organizations. This leads us as Leaguers to again approach the question of appointed judges versus another system to remove those who have not functioned adequately according to all the bar associations.

Deputy Registrars

The period for which you have been certified as a Deputy Registrar ended with this election. You must reapply in order to continue to register people to vote. Contact Terry Williams through the office, in order to re-enroll. Training sessions will be scheduled and she will have the information needed.

Call the League Office, 312-939-5935 extension 28, (Chicago League) for further information on how you can be involved in the next election.

State of the City Luncheon

The date has been set for the State of the City (SOC) luncheon. It is Friday, May 8, 2009, at noon at the Union League Club, 75 W. Jackson Blvd. **SAVE THE DATE.** This is our major fund raiser for the Chicago League.

The State of the City/Development Committee is hard at work planning for this important fund raising event. The topic that has been chosen is the economy as it relates to Chicago. Bernice Fortini is chairing the committee this year and we have a co-chair, Pat Graunke.

We know that you want to make the SOC a great success and you can help in many ways, either at home or at the League office. Some of the following jobs that need to be done are;

- Phone calls
- Stuffing envelopes
- Manning the office phone
- Contacting prospective donors and patrons for the Ad Book
- Helping put the Ad Book together

If you can help us in any way, we would welcome your support. You do not have to leave home to be of assistance.

Please contact Clara Fleming, Bernice Fortini or Pat Graunke at the Chicago League Office 312-939-5935, extension 28 or click on membership at www.lwvchicago.org.

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Toward a Shared Recovery by Lois Snyder

In a recent webcast, the Coalition for Human Needs featured Jared Bernstein of Living Standards Program, Economic Policy Institute, Barry Zegas, Director of Housing Policy, Consumer Federation of America, and Deborah Weinstein of the Coalition for Human Needs. Bernstein said the next president should hit the ground running with a recovery package: help for states; banks must deleverage; our agenda must not be abandoned because of budget restraints and we must hold our leaders accountable. "Never again accept: [no money]. There's money for war, there's money for the bailout [but]. . .there's no money for SCHIP."

Barry Zegas, Director of Housing Policy, Consumer Federation of America said, "What goes up, must come down! Housing market declines are steep and accelerating. If you have good credit and good assets, safe home ownership builds wealth. If you have weak credit and weak assets, well—"pigs don't fly." The earnings of working families decreased \$2,000 from Sept. '06 to June '08 when delinquency rates skyrocketed 25%. Counseling might have helped. There must be \$3 billion for FHA (Federal Housing Authority) refinance programs; \$4 billion for CDGB (Community Development Block Grants) supplement for neighborhood stabilization. There must be bankruptcy reform; and something to help renters in foreclosed properties.

Deborah Weinstein Director of the Coalition for Human Needs agreed "Trickle Down" theory of economics is dead. From the recession of 2001 to the good times of 2007, there were 4.4 million **more** poor people. No more good times with 800,000 jobless people exhausting their unemployment insurance by October 5th and only 1.1 million have it through December. Unemployment claims were more than 480,000 a week for 3 weeks ending October 18th. The unemployment rate is 6.1% (11.4 % for African Americans, 7.8% for Latinos, and 19.1% for youth ages 16-19). Ninety billion dollars is needed if economic recovery includes low income and vulnerable people.

We must hold our leaders accountable and write our representatives and senators. We must do everything possible to meet these needs.

Change from ILO

At its annual meeting October 10, 2008, representatives of local and state Leagues of Women Voters that are members of the Lake Michigan Interleague Organization (Lake MI ILO) voted to approve a change of name to the Lake Michigan League of Women Voters. The Lake MI ILO has actively lobbied in support of the Great Lakes Compact which Congress approved and President Bush signed earlier this year. While working with state and local Leagues, Lake MI ILO experienced no confusion, but when working with other organizations and lobbying government bodies the Lake MI ILO had to explain what it was and who was represented. This action has been approved by the Chicago Board at its November meeting. When approved by all the members of the ILO, it will become the Lake Michigan League of Women Voters.

Program Planning

The first Saturday in January will be the briefing on Program Planning for the Illinois League (LWVIL) and the Chicago League (LWV Chicago). This is the basis on which the Leagues will take action in the next biennium. All Unit Leaders or their representatives are asked to attend so that each Unit may respond to our Chicago Board. A compilation of the items requested will be done by the board and the LWVIL consensus sent on to the LWVIL Board.

Education Committee

The Education Committee met to start work on the position which appears in *Where We Stand – Chicago League of Women Voters*. Our concern is very basic. The **School Code** requires children to be in school (including home schooling) from age six to sixteen. This means students may quit at sixteen (some actually drop out before sixteen). These ages send the message - completion of high school is not necessary. In today's world, without a high school diploma, few jobs are even open, and most jobs require some post-secondary education (including that of teacher aide in the Chicago Public Schools). Pre-school education is necessary for many of our children to succeed in school itself. We propose requiring entry at five and leaving at 21 (or high school diploma).