



The

Chicago Voter

League of Women Voters of Chicago

June 2008

Website - www.LWVChicago.org

Vol. 58. No. 10



Dates To Remember

Meetings held at the League Office Unless otherwise Noted

To check on committee Meetings during the summer - call the office.

No Briefings

No Unit meetings

Development Committee Thursdays at 2:00 pm During the Summer Except July 3rd.

Membership Committee After the Development Committee

Education Committee Late July early August Call Winnie Slusser

Housing Committee September 15th

Executive Committee Meeting At the call of the President

Summer Board Meeting July 19th

Any other meetings Call the League Office 312-939-5935 Extension 28

President's Column

Summer's here and so is "Taste of Chicago." Some of you might remember that the Chicago LWV had a small scale "Taste" many years ago as a fundraiser. Anyway, while you are thinking about sampling some interesting foods, here is a sample of some interesting LWV issues and activities.

At the LWVUS Convention June 13-17, there were several League-based topics in workshops and caucuses. Some were on basic organization business like development, membership, managing meetings, bylaws and budgets. Others were issue-based, such as health care, climate change, the judicial system, elections, the environment, the National Popular Vote Study, the U.N., and homeless youth. In-between all this we had time for meals and conversation. The next National Convention will be in Atlanta in 2010.

Statewide, the major issue for the Fall is the vote on the Constitutional Convention. This past spring we discussed Con-Con in unit meetings and the consensus throughout the state by LWV members is that a **NO** vote is urged on the November ballot. Details are on our website: www.LWVChicago.org. If you belong to an organization that is interested in a discussion on Con-Con, we will gladly present a program for them.

LWVChicago held its Annual Meeting, Saturday, June 21st. we are continuing our Social Policy program about housing into the next year; the Education Committee needs to study Chicago Public School changes; the Fiscal Policy Committee is going to continue updating the **Tax Maze** and we would like someone to observe City Council meetings, especially on the City Budget; the Membership and Development Committees will be active in seeking new Leaguers and planning activities for all of us including a raffle, the State of the City luncheon and a candidates' fair. Voter Service will provide training for pollwatchers, voter registration and a Voter's Guide on the website.

We approved a dues increase because the other levels of LWV have raised their fees. Also the **Voter** costs more that \$8.00 per year to mail to each Leaguer and office expenses have increased. (As an aside, you know that if you have a serious financial concern, you may contact any Board member or Unit leader and we can work things out.) When you are completing your renewal form, please include your phone number and email. We need to get in touch with you faster than the US Mail delivers. Also, add you political address, which is on your Voter's Card.

At our Summer Board meeting we will develop the schedule of briefings and all-member meeting for the year. Of course changes often need to be made. A unit can plan additional meetings on various LWV topics

(Continued on page 4)

The Children's Museum

Statement to Chicago Plan Commission May 15, 2008

The League of Women Voters of Chicago is opposed to the construction of the Chicago Children's Museum in Grant Park. Our opposition to this proposed site is based on positions that our members have confirmed many times. We believe that the parks should be used for public recreation only, consistent with and enhancing the aesthetic quality of the parks. Buildings should be kept to a minimum. Plans for the parks should ensure adequate pedestrian access to the parks and lakefront and leave the lakefront free of obstacles such as buildings and roads that would interfere with the open lakefront.

Grant Park should remain a public ground, open and available to the public. It should not be whittled away for private use. It is important that Grant Park provide residents and visitors a variety of experiences. These experiences should include open space available for reflection and rest. The proposed Children's Museum with its skylights would insert a building into the park with obstacles that would impair the public's access to park space.

Today much of Grant Park is filled with activity. Millennium Park draws millions of visitors each year. The Pritzker Pavilion is the scene of concerts and performances. The Gospel, Blues and Jazz Fests take place in Grant Park and for ten days each summer the *Taste of Chicago* draws a million people to Grant Park. There are ball fields and tennis courts as well. All these activities are available to the public at no entrance charge. The proposed location for the Children's Museum conflicts with public space. It does so through admittance fees and through funding its construction by soliciting funds in exchange for naming rights.

Locating the Chicago Children's Museum in Grant Park will, inevitably, lead to prolonged and costly litigation. A century ago the Illinois Supreme Court affirmed the mandate that Grant Park remain clear of buildings and obstructions. The League of Women Voters of Chicago urges the Chicago Park District and the City of Chicago to recognize their obligation to comply with settled law and deny

permission to relocate the Children's Museum in Grant Park.

Therefore, we urge the Plan Commission to reject the proposed site for the Children's Museum in Grant Park.

Contrary to our testimony, the Plan Commission passed the park site.

School Funding

LWVIL continues to push for adequate funding for our schools. It does not look as if anything will be done about it unless there is a great change in the Legislature.

An attempt to raise income taxes on the wealthy failed in the House.

The old SB and HB 750 bills seem to have been shelved, and the new SB2288, which is similar to 750 passed out of the committee, and seems to have been set aside until the fall.

- Property taxes are exorbitant and rising
- State pays 1/3 of cost, national average is 50%
- Illinois has the lowest overall income tax in the nation.
- Other big cities pay more per child than Chicago, our richer suburban districts pay twice as much, others less.
- Capital dollars have not come from Springfield in four years. Upgrading the schools, making them safe, warm and dry is expensive. If a year-round school is planned it must be air-conditioned as well or kids won't learn.
- It is impossible to prove necessary tutoring and after-school programs to close the achievement gap and keep kids safe in the afternoon.
- High schools especially need more money
- Education is the foundation of a strong economy and a strong future.

Our children need better funding, and LWVIL along with LWVChicago have been working for this objective it seems like forever.

Affordable Housing

Rental Housing Remains *Out of Reach* for Millions of Americans; National Housing Wage Jumps to \$17.32

NLIHC's *Out of Reach 2007- 2008*, released April 7, reports that the national Housing Wage—the hourly wage a full-time worker must earn to afford a modest two-bedroom home in his or her community—for 2008 is **\$17.32**, while the average wage for all workers is **\$16.00** and the estimated wage for the average renter is just \$13.94, according to the report. The national Housing Wage is up from \$16.31 in the last *Out of Reach* report, and is nearly 36% higher than the comparable number for 2000. The report also finds that in 2008 a full-time (40 hours a week/52 weeks a year) minimum wage worker still cannot afford even a one-bedroom apartment **in any jurisdiction in the country** at the Fair Market Rent.

There is a National Housing Justice Movement, a project of the National Training and Information Center (NTIC) under way. They believe the struggle over housing for low-income communities of color is basically tied to the struggle against gentrification and for community control. It calls for stopping the displacement of low-income communities of color. It seeks to reverse punitive policies against low -income tenants (1-strike evictions). It wishes to expand the right to organize in public housing. It asks the federal investment to increase funding for housing for low-income families by expanding section 8 funding.

Call your senators and ask them to support S 2523 and include the Kerry-Snowe National Affordable Housing Trust Fund Act in the bill.

LOIS SMYDER

LWWUS

The League of Women Voters of the United States is seriously concerned with the Supreme Court decision to uphold the restrictive requirement for Photo ID in the Indiana case. It has already been proven to disenfranchise those who; should be allowed to vote (elderly nuns who did not possess such ID were turned away) Even if there were no cost for the photo, the time and effort necessary to obtain this kind of identification is hardest on the elderly and the handicapped.

UNIT MEETINGS

The May and June meetings of the LWW Units may present programs or have a final luncheon. Contact the Unit Leaders for more information.

Unit 1/5 – Downtown – (evening) – League Office
May 26th at 5:30 PM
Education Presentation
Unit Leader: Margaret Herring

Unit 9/11 – West Side (central) - Contact
Unit Leader: Joan Morton

Unit 21/35 – North Side
Contact Unit Leaders
Education Presentation
Bettina Schwartz or
Carol Westerlund

Unit 22 – Downtown - Daytime – League Office
Usually on a Wednesday at 10:00 am
At the League office
Unit Leader – Bernice Fortini

Unit 41/42 – Southwest Side
Saturday, June 7 at 10 am
Walker Branch Public Library
11071 S. Hoyne
Education Presentation
Contact Betsy Perrine

Unit 66/74 – Hyde Park Area – Day Meeting:
Annual Luncheon Meeting
Saturday, June 14th
Montgomery Place at 12:00 PM.
Unit Leader - Dorothy Scheff

**STATE OF THE CITY 2008
Luncheon**

Thanks to the effort of many members of the Chicago League, a successful luncheon was held on May 2, 2008 at the Union League Club. The event assembled two hundred guests to hear the panel made up of Representative Julie Hamos, Frank Beal, Executive Director of Chicago Metropolis 2020 and Laurence Msall, President of the Civic Federation expound on Mass Transit and its great importance to the city of Chicago. The Moderator for the discussion was Mike Flannery, Political Editor for CBS Channel 2.

A Civic Contribution award was given to Sister Patricia Crowley, O.S.B. for her work with homeless women through Deborah's Place and Housing Opportunities and Maintenance for the Elderly (H.O.M.E.) and to Jacky Grimshaw, Vice President for Policy, Transportation and Community Development for the Center for Neighborhood Technology.

The Corporate Chair was Lisa Snow, Managing Director, Huron Consulting Group. Sponsoring organizations were Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Illinois, Exelon, Huron Consulting Group, ABC 7 Chicago, Amalgamated Transit Union, Chicago Board of Elections, Northern Trust Bank, Regional Transportation Authority, and the Union League Club of Chicago.

Individual sponsors were Ms Leslie Corbett, Ms Margaret Herring, and Mr. and Mrs. Tom Kallen.

The Chicago League sprang back into its rightful place among women's organizations after several years without a State of the City Event. The latest edition of **Guide to Local Government**, which is designed as a real source of information, was distributed as a program book.

*Clara Fleming and Bernice Fortini, Co-Chairs for
the State of the City Committee*

Annual meeting

Come to the Annual Meeting on Saturday, June 21st to be held in the Conference Room of the Building, 332 S. Michigan Avenue.

LWVChicago has done this in order to bring the cost down to \$10.00 per member. After the fabulous event of the State of the City Luncheon, we felt that asking members to pay for yet another meal would be counter-productive with a new fiscal year in July.

This will be a working meeting. We do not have Program Planning, but we will sent our emphasis for the next year. We must elect Officers members of the Board of Directors as well as the Nominating Committee for next year. The Operating Budget must be adopted. Unfortunately we are proposing a dues increase to meet the increases made by LWVCook County and LWVUS.

The flyer for this affair is included in this Voter.

Membership

Those who are interested in helping increase LWV membership, please attend a meeting on Tuesday, June 10th, at 10:00 am in the Conference Room. Valerie Krejciec, LWVIL, will present a program based on the LWVUS Membership Recruitment Initiative. Leave a message for Bernice or Esta on the voice mail if you plan to attend.

<i>The Chicago Voter</i>	
League of Women Voters of Chicago 332 S. Michigan Avenue, Suite 1150 Chicago, IL 60604 312-939-5935 E-mail – info@LWVChicago.org	
Esta Kallen	President
Margaret Herring	Vice President
Pamela Stauffer	Vice President
Norma Braude	Secretary
Rochelle Riffer	Treasurer
Winnie Slusser	Voter Editor pro-tem