



Calendar

November

2 – Filing deadline for April Election

11 – Consensus meeting on the Form of Local Government, 7 pm, Grace Methodist Church

18 – Ethics Reform meeting, 7:30 pm, Meeting room on the lower level of the Naperville Municipal Center

December

4 – Holiday Party (Details to come)

January

5 - End of Registration to Vote in February Primary

11-28 Early Voting for Primary

February

2 - Primary Elections

6 - LWVIL ISSUES BRIEFING - 8:30 am - 3:00 pm, University Center, 525 South State Street, Chicago
Issues: Redistricting, Fiscal Crisis, Census, and more!

20 - Planning for Local and National Program in 2010-2011
10 AM to 2PM with Pot Luck lunch
Place TBA

Look for the President’s Letter on Page 2 of the Voter

November is the month for:

Consensus Discussion on the Method of Electing our City Council

Wednesday, November 11 – 7:00 pm
Grace Methodist Church, Room 321, 300 East Gartner Road

At our annual meeting last spring, members voted to re-examine our long-held position supporting a “hybrid mix” method of electing some City Council members from districts, while keeping the rest “at-large.” Due to member turnover and renewed local interest in the issue, our study is most timely. If we reach agreement on the consensus question, we may want to speak on this issue. Packets, assembled by our local government study committee members Jack Barry, Jane Barnes, Connie Burns and Joan Norman, have been mailed to every member – watch for yours and plan to bring it to the meeting. The committee will present the findings from their research, discuss the pro’s and con’s of each option, explain the mechanics of changing our system and other relevant aspects of this issue. Following their presentation, the rest of us will have ample time to discuss what we believe the League’s position should be. An interesting scenario appears on page 5.

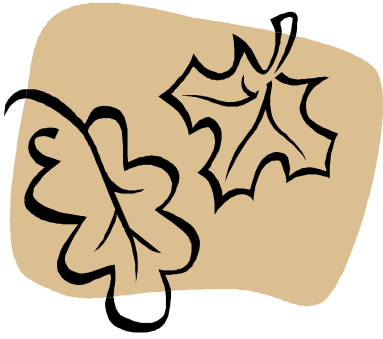
Continuing Series on Ethics Reform

Wednesday, November 18 – 7:30 pm
Naperville Municipal Center, Lower Level Meeting Rooms

In the second in our developing series of discussions about ethical government, DuPage County Board District 5 representatives Jim Healy (R-Naperville) and Tony Michelassi (D-Aurora) will present their perspectives on the proposed DuPage County ethics ordinance, the newly formed transparency committee, and other topics related to ethics policy at the County level. The ordinance is available on the County website: www.co.dupage.il.us

Over the next year, the League of Women Voters of Naperville will be hosting a series of discussions/roundtables on the topic of "Ethics." Our goal is to do a year- long series on various topics relating to ethics at the local, state and national level. The first scheduled meeting was held on October 22, 2009 featuring James Wright and James Bonk of the Office of the Executive Inspector General for the State of Illinois.

For more information or to get involved, contact the League:
EthicsStudy1@naperville.il.lwv.org or call Mary Wright at 630 901 4535.



President's Letter

My letter this month has to do with why I joined the League. I hope it will move you to recall your own decision to join.

My son, Joe, who is now almost 32, was 5 years old and attending the United Methodist Nursery School. I had worked with the League as a member of another community organization on the development of curbside recycling in Naperville. Some of you may remember when the League's Anne Aitchison badgered and wheedled and LED Naperville residents into collecting their paper, cans, and bottles and delivering them to the site downtown along the river, where they were manually flattened, bundled, and crushed by eager and farsighted volunteers, instead of simply being added to the landfill. I was impressed with the vision and the determination of the women in the League, but like others I was content to let them take the active role. My days were pretty busy!

One day in the Grace parking lot, I was cornered by Nancy Ali, whose son was also in the nursery school with Joe. She asked me, with a big smile and typical League directness, why I wasn't a League member. Clearly, we shared an interest in civic projects! I gave her the familiar reasons about time, but in the end, my only answer was that no one had yet asked me with a sense of urgency. Yet I knew that the League's commitment through its members to doing something, not just talking about it, was something I wanted –and needed- to join. Thus, I became a believer in the power of Grassroots.

Over the years, I learned a lot by doing: With other women who cared about responsible civic society, we studied and lobbied for issues of gifted education, class size, group housing, pesticide use, master planning, diversity in school curriculum and hiring, responsible decisions about the environment, rights under the U.S. Constitution, health care, governmental "sunshine laws." We observed elected and appointed government, registered voters, held candidates' forums, created voter guides, encouraged civic education in our schools, gained knowledge and skills for talking to public officials, and had a lot of fun in the process. Even frustration can be a source of laughter and optimism!

Is that your experience of the League of Women Voters today in Naperville? It could be.

You don't have to be an expert on an issue. You gain expertise by asking questions. You don't have to be retired with a lot of time on your hands. Technology has given us many new ways of keeping informed and in touch and working together. You don't have to be a political wonk (though you might become one.) You just have to care enough about democracy to take one step toward greater involvement. And then maybe another.

In a world of conflict and confusion, where it's easy to get cynical or discouraged, or simply tuned out in relation to the decisions of government, you could find encouragement and companionship to make a difference- for yourself as well as for the community. So I'm asking you, like Nancy did me: Will you RE-join the League?

Jane Barnes

Holiday Gathering

Friday, December 4
380 Prairie Knolls Drive
7 p.m.



Thanks to the Knezoviches for opening their home to our holiday gathering! Please bring an hors d'oeuvre to share. Partners and guests welcome! RSVPs to Jane Barnes at 630 820 0255 are helpful, to allow for adequate amenities.

A couple of traditions for this party have grown up over the years.

First, a contribution to Loaves and Fishes Food Pantry will be gratefully received and delivered by a generous League volunteer.

Second, the White Elephant gift exchange provides a certain amount of suspense, laughter, and occasional fierce competition. Here's how that works: Bring a wrapped, unlabeled object from around your house, something that you no longer want. (Maybe you NEVER wanted it!) Those participating draw numbers for the order of selection. Rules allow subsequent selectors to take away a previously selected gift. Our annual exchange is guaranteed to provide entertainment, insight into personalities, and exchange of one White Elephant for another. Experienced party-goers will recognize old favorites. But remember, what's junk to one is a jewel to someone else!

Membership Outreach to Teachers

As the latest in our ongoing efforts to boost League membership, Jane Barnes, President of the Naperville League of Women Voters, and League Director Dianne McGuire manned an attractively designed table displaying recent League publications at a pre-retirement meeting hosted on October 22 by the Teacher Retirement System at Neuqua Valley High School. Approximately fifty individuals received information and many email addresses were shared. With a little effort and follow through now, which Jane and Dianne plan on doing, perhaps many of these individuals might consider League membership. It was the first time we have requested a presence at a TRS function, but hopefully it will not be the last.

Dianne McGuire, LWVN Board of Directors

U.S. Census 2010

DuPage Counts met on October 7, at the College of DuPage to kick off the effort to count everyone who resides in DuPage County for the 2010 Census. The Illinois League of Women Voters and Leagues of Downers Grove/Lisle/Woodridge, Elmhurst, Glen Ellyn, Naperville, and Wheaton are part of this community collaboration, along with The Citizen Advocacy Center, College of DuPage and DuPage County. Unfortunately, the event was not well attended despite the fact that much effort had gone into setting it up. Mary Schaafsma, True Census Count Project Manager of the Illinois League, was one of a handful of speakers.

Census data determine boundaries for state and local legislative and congressional districts. A complete count is important to Illinois as the state could lose one or even two congressional seats if everyone is not counted. In addition, the federal government allocates more than \$400 billion to states and communities based, in part, on census data.

A short (10 questions) Census questionnaire will be mailed or delivered to households in February and March of 2010. Census takers will visit households that do not return questionnaires to take a count in person. For more information and a video go to www.dupagecounts.org, or www.census.gov/, which has a link to the 2010 census, and www.2010censusjobs.gov for people interested in employment opportunities with the 2010 census.

Jill Versace, LWVN representative to DuPage Counts

Rosemary Martin Democracy in Action Award **Deadline for nominations: April 2, 2010**

We are looking for nominations for the Rosemary Martin Democracy in Action Award. Individuals or groups nominated for the Award will have been instrumental in an activity such as the following:

- Creating a forum for information-gathering on a public issue of significance to the Naperville area community
- Facilitating and encouraging civic participation through voter registration or some other initiative
- Providing balanced education opportunities to further informed decision-making
- Instituting processes that welcome citizens' involvement and input
- Creating an inclusive climate that encourages civil discourse on public matters

In 2009 Naperville Community Television, Channel 17 received the Award for its balanced and broad election coverage. This included pre-election interviews with candidates as well as rebroadcasts of forums in races for Naperville City Council, Naperville Park District Board, and Naperville School District 203, and Indian Prairie School District 204 School Boards. Previous recipients include the Naperville Area Homeowners Confederation in 2008, the Conservation Foundation in 2007, and Mary Morrissey Hinshaw & CulbertsonLLP, and Naperville Community Unit School District 203 for the Crosstown Mock Trial in 2006.

The Award will be presented at the Annual Meeting in the spring. Further information about the purpose, eligibility, selection process of the award can be found on our website in the "about LWV" section, where you can also find a nomination form.

Karin Snodgrass, RMDIA Chair

Imaginary Scenario Based on a True Life Experience of Local Government Study Committee Member Connie Burns...

.. a friend comes by and says “What do you think when I say ‘PAUL HINTERLONG’?” ‘Hmm, you respond, “the name sounds familiar but’

Well, our questioner goes on, “try ‘JUDITH BRODHEAD’ then”“that’s better, you say, “She’s a LWV member and teaches at NCC also, I think.”

“OK, but not quite on the mark. Let’s move to ‘GRANT WEHRLI.’ “ “One of the Wehrli family, of course, but I’m not sure just which one”

The questioner sees that this ploy isn’t working. Embarrassing. So, cutting to the quick, she says tersely, “DOUG KRAUSE.” AHA now I see it ... Doug Krause is a long-time member of the Naperville City Council!”

ON TARGET! NAME RECOGNITION!

And now if you heard “KENN MILLER” or “DICK FURSTENEAU” or “JIM BOYAJIAN” or “ROBERT FIESELER” I’d respond COUNCIL MEMBERS ALL! [And is one really a litigant??]

BUT

Beyond name recognition, I wouldn’t know any more about them. Could I even recognize any in a crowd?
Could I identify their particular civic interests?
Could I specify what any has done for Naperville?
Could I say to whom I would turn if I had a problem with the city??

YES

These are our 8 at-large council members elected from the city as a whole, for 4 year terms. Might I have a better sense of the council members if one of them were ‘mine’? If one were elected from ‘my’ district?

OR

would having district councilors just increase the parochialism of voters vis a vis government. “Only if it does something for me, only if it deals with MY concerns am I interested in local government at all”?” Come to the Consensus meeting on November 11 to discuss and deliberate these questions.

Studs Terkel Humanities Service Award

The winner of this year’s Studs Terkel Humanities Service Award, awarded by the Illinois Humanities Council, for the city of Naperville was *Stephanie Downs Hughes*, a longtime member of and leader within the Naperville League of Women Voters. Dianne McGuire, a friend and fellow League member, drew the Mayor’s attention to Stephanie’s wonderful accomplishments within the community, and the mayor’s office proudly submitted her nomination forms to the Humanities Council.

Stephanie and her husband, Duncan, have hosted Diversity Dinners for members of the community for several years. These dinners, which are planned and hosted by members of each dinner group, provide opportunities for those from different cultures/perspectives to enjoy one another’s company while breaking bread together, generating friendships and creating greater understanding. In addition to Diversity Dinners, Duncan and Stephanie host Just Views once a month during which a provocative film is shown, with great discussions following. Stephanie’s award for her efforts to build awareness and understanding of various issues within our society will be presented to her by Mayor Pradel at a future date. She will be receiving a beautifully engraved and personalized bronze medal at that time. She will also be honored at a festive reception in the fall of 2010 in either Springfield or Chicago. Congratulations, Stephanie!

LWV Letter to the Editors of DuPage County Newspapers

August 10, 2009

We, the League of Women Voters in Downers Grove/Woodridge/Lisle, Glen Ellyn, Naperville and Wheaton, applaud the efforts of the DuPage County Election Commission to strengthen the ethics provisions for officers and employees of the Election Commission. Given the frequent reports of unethical behavior at so many levels of government over the past decades, it is important that the public be assured of sound and transparent governmental practices, something the League of Women Voters has advocated since our inception nearly 90 years ago.

However, we think the Commission could do better.

The way the draft was originally presented to the public and the time frame the Commission established for public comment did not allow sufficient opportunity for citizens to thoroughly review the ordinance and express their concerns. While the Commission did extend the deadline for comment and postponed their vote on the ordinance, we strongly urge the Commission to continue to allow more time to inform citizens of the additional changes and extend the period for citizens to comment by the following means:

- Send a news release alerting the general public of the proposed amendments and the opportunity to comment on-line.
- Extend the period the proposed amendments will be posted on-line and the opportunity for the public to comment on-line.
- Make all comments available to the public.
- Hold a public forum to discuss the proposed amendments and publicize the forum widely throughout DuPage County.

In addition, flaws in the ordinance as it is proposed should be addressed. Some examples include:

- Officials and staff should never receive fees, royalties, dividends or any financial benefit whatsoever from a vendor.
- The idea of a single ethics officer puts too much authority on one person. Furthermore, by receiving a fee from the Election Commission, the impartiality of any person who takes on that responsibility is compromised.

Finally, what's missing? At the minimum:

- There should be a provision to protect a whistle blower.
- There should be a requirement that it is the DUTY of those bound by the ordinance to report ethics violations and to cooperate in investigations.
- There should be a requirement for all Election Commission staff and board members to file statements of economic interest.

The DuPage Election Commission should open the doors to real reform, write a better ethics ordinance and allow the public sufficient time for meaningful review and comment.

Sincerely,

Nancy Peraino, President, League of Women Voters of Downers Grove, Woodridge and Lisle

Ginger Wheeler, President, League of Women Voters of Glen Ellyn

Jane Barnes, President, League of Women Voters of Naperville

Missey Wilhelm, President, League of Women Voters of Wheaton

New York Times Editorial: October 28, 2009

Trust, Antitrust and Your Vote,

The nation's largest voting machine manufacturer, Election Systems & Software, announced last month that it was buying the United States voting machine division of Diebold, its main competitor. The sale could mean that nearly 70 percent of the nation's voting precincts would be served by a single corporation. That raises serious antitrust questions and serious concerns about the vulnerability of future elections.

The new company would have enormous reach. Without meaningful competition, localities would have fewer choices when they bought voting machines. If something were to go wrong — an inadvertent failure in hardware or software or intentional tampering by a bad actor — it could have a disastrous effect on the entire nation's vote.

After the deal was announced, voting-rights groups expressed concern. Senator Charles Schumer wrote to Attorney General Eric Holder Jr. calling for antitrust regulators to scrutinize the purchase. The Senate Rules and Administration Committee, of which Mr. Schumer is chairman, is conducting a review of the proposed sale and intends to forward it to the Justice Department.

Hart InterCivic, whose voting machines are in use in about 9 percent of the nation's precincts, has filed a lawsuit in federal court in Delaware challenging the sale, arguing that the deal could harm the company's ability to retain customers and attract new ones. The court has scheduled a hearing for December to consider the company's request for an injunction that could block the sale.

The interests of voters should be part of this lawsuit. The Justice Department and state attorneys general should consider formally joining the suit, so they can argue that the combination of Election Systems & Software and Diebold would make the voting experience worse and reduce the reliability of election results. The Justice Department's antitrust division could also make its own attempt to block the sale. The enormous market share that the newly combined company would control should by itself set off anticompetitive alarms.

Since the 2000 presidential election, the public has rightfully been skeptical about how elections are run. We fear that if any one voting machine maker is allowed to dominate the market, there will be even greater reasons to worry about the nation's flawed voting system.

A version of this article appeared in print on October 29, 2009, on page A28 of the New York edition.





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c/o Mary Ellen Barry, Editor
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