



## Calendar

### April

**8** – AAUW Education Forum, featuring District 203 and 204 Superintendents, 7:00 pm, Forum Room Neuqua Valley Gold Campus (Building West of main high school) 2720 95th Street

**10**-Consensus Meeting on Con-Con, Naperville Township Office, Water Street, 7:00 pm

**12** – Board meeting, 7:00 pm, home of Judy Brodhead, 2795 Springdale Circle, Naperville

### May

**28** –Annual Meeting, Jimmy's Char House, 7:00 pm

## President's Letter

It was great to see so many of you at the **State of the Community Dinner** on March 5. Many thanks to Jane Barnes, Bonnie and Dave Olson, Annette Smith, Mary Ellen and Jack Barry, and Karin Snodgrass for all their efforts in planning the dinner and program. Karin took on the task of chairing the Rosemary Martin Democracy in Action Award, and was assisted by Stephanie Penick of Positively Naperville and one of our new members, Pamela Eldridge, in choosing the finalists. The committee chose the Naperville Area Homeowners' Confederation as the winner of this year's RMDIA. All three finalists were presented with framed plaques, and the name of the winner will be added to the plaque mounted at the Municipal Center (look for it on the wall next to the City Clerk's counter). Thanks also to the members who were able to be donors as well as attendees – we really appreciate it!

Our speakers, chosen by Jane Barnes, were Michael Bevis from the City of Naperville, Laureen Blissard of the U.S. Green Building Council, Chicago Chapter, and Michelle Hickey-Fouts of Seven Generations Ahead and the Naperville Renewable Energy Program, all of whom addressed "Building Green." Our subtitle was "A discussion of individual and public options for environmental stewardship." Mary Ellen and Jack Barry put together a Power Point slideshow that played preceding the program, and Jack acted as photographer during the dinner and has posted photos of the dinner and our RMDIA nominees and winner on our website – what a great addition to have photos! Annette Smith assembled the wonderful and informative centerpieces on every table.

You won't want to miss our **April 10 consensus meeting** on the question of whether Illinois voters should call for a new constitutional convention. With the "con-con" issue on the November ballot, it's time for League members across the state to determine what the League's 2008 position will be so that the League is ready to speak out. Mary Ellen Barry and Annette Smith will present both sides of the question at our meeting on the 10<sup>th</sup> and then you will have the opportunity for a full discussion before arriving at our local position. A discussion guide and meeting information begin on page 2 of this Voter.

Once again it's time to plan for our **Annual Meeting** – doesn't it seem as though we just had our January Planning Meeting? We've set the date for May 28 at a new venue. Let's hope there is no more danger of snow by then. You'll find details about the Annual meeting on page 5 of this *Voter*. Program information, budget and nominations will be in the April *Voter*.

Mark your calendars now and plan to attend both of our spring meetings.

*Judy Brodhead*

**State Constitutional Convention (Con-Con) Study  
Consensus Meeting, April 10, 2008  
Naperville Township Offices (additional parking at City Hall)  
139 Water Street, 7-9:00 pm**



*“No society can make a perpetual constitution, or even a perpetual law. The earth belongs always to the living generation...Every constitution, then, and every law, naturally expires at the end of 19 years. If it be enforced longer, it is an act of force and not right.”*

*Thomas Jefferson, in a letter to James Madison  
From Paris, September 6, 1789*



In addition to the exciting presidential race, Illinois voters will find an important referendum on their ballots in November. As we do every twenty years in Illinois, we must again consider whether we want to call a constitutional convention to rewrite our 1970 state constitution. The League was instrumental in the passage of the 1970 Constitution and fought hard to include this automatic review as one of its provisions. The last time voters considered calling a convention was in 1988. That time, voters decided against calling for a convention. The state League, joined by local Leagues all over the state, campaigned against the call. Naperville’s Mary Ellen Barry served as state League president at that time and reports that she even did a statewide “fly-around” to six Illinois cities with Abraham Lincoln to support the League’s position.

This spring, local Leagues will again hold consensus meetings to decide whether the League should support or oppose calling a constitutional convention in November 2008. We’re hoping all members will take time to read the background material in this Voter and plan to attend the consensus meeting so our voices will be heard.

**LWVIL Consensus Questions**

- 1. Should the League of Women Voters of Illinois support or oppose the call for a state constitutional convention?**
- 2. What factors influenced your decision?**

**Discussion Guide**

**Note:** This material is excerpted from the LWVIL Committee Guide. Copies of the complete guide, as well as other useful information, are on our website, [naperville.lwv.il.org](http://naperville.lwv.il.org).

**Why is this issue important to the League?**

The League was actively involved in the passage of the state constitution. In 1965, the General Assembly formed a Constitutional Study Commission to determine whether a new constitution was needed. State Representative Marjorie Pebworth, LWVIL President from 1961-63, chaired this commission. Their recommendation to call a convention was

approved by voters in 1968 by a three-to-one margin. Many League members served as delegates to the convention and the League campaigned vigorously for its passage. In a special election held in December 1970, voters approved the new constitution.

In the election, voters had an opportunity to vote on four controversial issues separately. They were single-member districts (rejected then, but adopted by amendment in 1980 with League support), election of judges (retained, but opposed by the League), abolition of capital punishment (rejected, but later supported by the League), and granting of the vote to 18 year olds (rejected, but later granted by the 26<sup>th</sup> amendment to the U.S. Constitution and a subsequent Illinois constitutional amendment.)

### **Besides a convention, are there other ways to change our constitution?**

There are two ways to propose amendments to our constitution without rewriting the whole document:

1. Approval of a proposed amendment by a three-fifths vote of both houses of the General Assembly. Then the amendment is submitted to the voters at the next general election occurring at least six months after its approval by the legislature.
2. The second method applies only to amendments to the “structural and procedural subjects contained” in the Legislative Article. Amendments to this article can be submitted to voters through citizen initiative. These amendments may be proposed by a petition signed by a number of electors equal in number to at least eight percent of the total votes cast for candidates for Governor in the preceding gubernatorial election.

In order for the Constitution to be amended by either method, three-fifths of those voting on the amendment or a majority of those voting in the election must approve the proposed amendment.

### **How many times has the Illinois constitution been amended?**

Seventeen amendments have been submitted to the voters, with ten being approved, including the “Cutback Amendment,” which reduced the size of the legislature by eliminating cumulative voting, and establishing single-member districts.

### **Why support a constitutional convention?**

1. A convention provides an opportunity for more thoughtful integration of new proposals into the constitution than is possible through the amendment process.
2. A convention would increase public awareness and interest in state government.
3. Voters are just as well able to uphold democratic principles as the members of the General Assembly.
4. Single issue groups are unlikely to get the votes to control a convention and the final product must be approved by the voters.
5. A convention could deal with issues not being addressed by the General Assembly.

### **Why oppose a constitutional convention?**

1. Our constitution was substantially rewritten just 40 years ago. Conditions haven’t changed sufficiently to warrant a complete rewrite.
2. Our constitution is able to be amended without much difficulty.
3. A convention would be very expensive. The 1970 convention cost \$14 million (\$78 million in current dollars, and estimates run much higher.)
4. The process of considering a call will stimulate interest in the constitution and encourage revision by amendment.
5. Important gains achieved in the 1970 constitution could be lost if extreme views prevailed.

Annette Smith and Mary Ellen Barry  
ConCon Consensus Co-chairs

# What is Consensus? How do we get there?

If you're new to the League and haven't participated in a study before, you may be wondering what we mean by consensus. This article describes the process we'll use on April 10 to arrive at agreement on the issue of calling a state constitutional convention.

Before the League can take action, members must agree in broad terms on what they think about the various aspects of a public policy issue – the League position. **CONSENSUS IS A PROCESS WHEREBY MEMBERS PARTICIPATE IN A GROUP DISCUSSION OF AN ISSUE.** The accord reached by the group is not a simple majority, nor unanimity, but rather the overall sense of the group. It is a dynamic process – the discussion evokes an exchange of ideas, areas of agreement evolve and opinions crystallize.

**Role of our members** – Read the discussion guide in this Voter, check out our website for links to even more information on Con-Con, and be sure to attend the April 10 meeting to make your voice heard.

**Role of the Study Committee** -- LWVN Committee members Annette Smith and Mary Ellen Barry will present both sides of the Constitutional Convention question – to call or not to call. Members will have plenty of additional time to offer their own views in a member discussion. As a sense of the meeting develops, members will determine if there is general agreement with one or the other position and move on to summarize our League's main reasons for arriving at this conclusion.

**Role of the LWVN Board** --The committee will submit the meeting results to the LWVN board for approval. It will be sent immediately to the LWVIL board.

**Role of the State Board** – Since this is a state League study, it is up to the LWVIL board to determine that statewide consensus has been reached and to announce our new position. This will take place in May and the state board will provide direction on how our League can participate in the campaign for or against ConCon in the November general election.

## Rosemary Martin Democracy in Action 2008

The League received a record 8 nominations for the Rosemary Martin Democracy in Action Award this year. The review committee included Stephanie Penik of Positively Naperville, Pamela Eldridge, a new member of our League, and myself. The committee reviewed all nominations, and identified the top three nominees, as well as this year's recipient of the Award.

The three finalists included the Illinois Ballot Integrity Project, represented by Melisa Urda and Jean Kaczmarek, co-chairs, the Naperville Area Homeowners Confederation, represented by Chuck Schlabach, president, and Naperville Community Television, Channel 17, represented by Elizabeth Spencer, executive director. The finalists were invited to be guests, and attended, our State of the Community Dinner on Wednesday, March 5.

At the conclusion of the Dinner, I was pleased to present the Naperville Area Homeowners Confederation with the Award. All finalists received a framed certificate. The plaque which hangs in the Naperville Municipal Center honoring the Rosemary Martin Democracy in Action winners will be updated to include the Naperville Area Homeowners Confederation as the 2008 recipient. Previous recipients of the Award include Hinshaw & Culbertson LLP and School District 203: Crosstown Mock Trial in 2006, and the Conservation Foundation in 2007.

**Karin Snodgrass**

**Annual Meeting**  
**Jimmy's Char House, 523 Fairway Drive**  
**Wednesday, May 28, 7:00 pm**

This year our Annual Meeting will take place on Wednesday, May 28, at Jimmy's Charhouse (briefly called Andrew's Open Pit, the restaurant has gone back to the original name), 523 Fairway Drive. Directions: Route 59 to North Aurora Road; go west on North Aurora to Fairway drive; you'll see it easily from North Aurora Road. We will begin dinner at 7 p.m. and proceed with our meeting after that.

Our bylaws call for most of the information about the Annual Meeting to be conveyed to the membership one month ahead, including our proposed Program, a slate of candidates for the Board offices, and our budget. However, there is one task that should be completed earlier than that: "The voting members may make recommendations to the Board of Directors at least two months before the Annual Meeting." So if you, as members, have suggestions to our board that need to be voted on at our Annual Meeting, please let us know as soon as possible. You can do that by contacting any of us by phone or email. Our next board meeting will be held on April 12 at my house, 2795 Springdale Circle, Naperville, at 7 p.m.

The dinner menu will consist of soup, salad, an entrée, vanilla ice cream for dessert, and soft drinks, tea, and coffee. Alcoholic beverages are available, although not included in the price of dinner, which is \$25, the same price we have charged for the Annual Meeting dinner for several years. On the night of the dinner, you can choose one of the three following entrees: Wood-Roasted Chicken, Charbroiled Pork Chops, or Spaghettini with Shrimp. The pasta can also be prepared as a vegetarian dish if desired. Please RSVP to me at [jabrodhead@noctrl.edu](mailto:jabrodhead@noctrl.edu) or 630-637-5276 by May 22. That's my office number, so you can call it any time; it shows up on my email and won't disturb me even if it's very late! If you think you will need a ride to the Annual Meeting, please let me or Jane Barnes (630-820-0255) know and we will secure a ride for you. See you at the Annual Meeting – Wednesday, May 28, 7 p.m., at Jimmy's Charhouse!  
Judy Brodhead

## In Brief

- You'll find the current *Voter* on our website, in addition to pictures from the State of the Community Dinner and links to complete Con-Con background information. Check it out today – <http://www.naperville.il.lwv.org/>. We plan to archive the *Voters* on the web for your convenience.
- The League's National Convention will be held in Portland, Oregon from June 13 – 17. Judy Brodhead will attend for the Naperville League. Our membership entitles us to just one delegate. However, often there are additional delegate credentials available from other leagues that cannot send their full complement. If you would like to go, please contact Judy for more information. This is a great opportunity to connect with counterparts from all over the country. There are terrific speakers, great workshops and the plenary sessions are unique. (See page 7 for more on the national convention).
- Mary Ellen Barry is serving as chair of the budget committee for the annual meeting. John Nolan is serving as chair of the nominating committee. If you wish to serve on our board of directors or would like to nominate someone to serve as an officer or director, please contact John at [jpnolansr@sbcglobal.net](mailto:jpnolansr@sbcglobal.net).

# January 2008 Program Planning Report

League members met on January 26 to discuss issues to be proposed by the board for consideration by members at our annual meeting. In addition, members responded to a similar charge from the national board to review national positions and recommend changes to the national program, when it is voted on at our national convention in June. Below is a summary of that discussion.

## National Program Discussion

Representative Government and International Relations positions were discussed, with the following comment:

- Concern exists over the issue of protecting the voting process from inaccurate and insecure tabulation systems. A concentration on that aspect or a new study of that as a separate issue was suggested.
- The placement of Reproductive Choice under Citizens' Rights indicates a shift from earlier focus on the issue as a matter of health. Connection to that aspect of the position should be made.
- The effect of invasive surveillance procedures of telephone and computer use might be emphasized under Individual Liberties.
- The Trade position, newly revised and adopted in 2002, might be highlighted for action evaluation.

## Local Program Planning Discussion

These local program suggestions will be taken into consideration as the Board chooses recommended program items for vote at the Annual Meeting. The items listed here will be eligible for consideration at the Annual Meeting, whether they are recommended or not, as our bylaws stipulate. Consideration will require a majority vote of those present. Advocacy and public information action not selected for recommendation are not forbidden, but the vote at the Annual Meeting has the force of choosing resource priorities. Any change to existing program position, such as a review or new study does require member approval.

### Review /new study:

- Transportation Master Plan

### Advocacy emphases:

- lead clean-up at Sportsman's Park
- campaign finance
- zoning/housing issues
- library services
- global warming
- open government issues

### Provide public information:

- government funding of education
- DuPage County Election Commission policies and procedures: destruction of records; paper ballot v. automated voting systems in maintaining secure and accurate vote count
- proposed Illinois Constitutional Convention (Con Con - **already planned for April 10**)
- global warming
- how local government works
- civil liberties

**Jane Barnes, Program Vice President**

## Looking for Inspiration?

It's been a long hard winter here in Naperville. If your attitude needs adjustment, visit the Storybank on the LWWUS website, [www.lww.org](http://www.lww.org). (The Storybank is in the member section of the website, so you'll need a password which you can get from the membership department on the log-in page.) The Storybank contains personal recollections by League members all over the country about experiences they've had in the League.

Better yet, if you've had a fun or interesting experience in our League, why not post it on the Storybank. Be sure to let us know if you do!

## Education Forum

The American Association of University Women is sponsoring a meeting with the Superintendents of Districts 203 and 204. They have invited League members especially. This is a good chance to get updated information on the various activities of our school districts.

Time: Tuesday, April 8  
7 p.m.

Place: Forum Room  
Neuqua Valley Gold Campus  
(Building West of main high school)  
2720 95th Street

## National Convention: Reaching New Heights Together June 13 – 18, 2008 Portland Oregon

You can find registration and program information about the convention on the LWWUS website. The convention will address the same topics we discuss at our annual meeting each year:

- Budget
- Bylaws
- Program
- Nominations

In addition there will be nationally recognized speakers, a "dine-around" in Portland (you sign up to go to the restaurant of your choice with like-minded Leaguers) and a dinner banquet. A new workshop on "Media Outreach Tactics for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century" will "provide training in an area that is vital to our success in building the League. If issues are your forte, there will be many groups focused on League issues throughout the days – and nights – of the convention. Judy Brodhead has information on obtaining the necessary credentials and there is money in our League budget to defray at least some of your expenses. Contact Judy if you're considering attending.





**League of Women Voters of Naperville  
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