



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF THE ELGIN AREA

VOTER

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The League In Action

<http://www.elgin.il.lwvnet.org>

August, 2009

CALENDAR

Date	Day	Time	Place	Event
Aug 19	Wed	6 pm	Gail Borden Public Library Community Rooms A & B	Film <i>Iron Jawed Angels</i> Celebrate the passage of the 19th Amendment. Serving Special Suffragette Smoothies.
Aug 20	Thu	?	?	Health Care for America Now Meeting, details not available at press time. More info via weekly bulletin.
Aug 25	Tue	7 pm	In The Neighborhood Deli	ECCO See Climate Change Committee on page 3
Aug 31	Mon	6:30 pm	Sigi's condo: #603 at 1450 Plymouth Ct, buzz #13 (Tyler Towers on McLean)	Summer Salad Supper with US Rep Bill Foster. Bring your favorite salad to share.
Sep 1	Tue	7 pm	Tyler Towers Clubhouse	Board Meeting >>> NOTE DATE CHANGE <<<
Sep 22	Tue	6:30 pm	Gail Borden Public Library	ECCO Showing Frontline film <i>Heat</i>
Sep 22	Tue	7 pm	Streamwood High School	Community Dialogue on State Budget Crisis Co-sponsored by LWVEA and Voices for Illinois Children Leadership Committee. We will register voters, too!
Oct 4	Sun	3 pm	Gail Borden Public Library Community Rooms A & B	Getting past Gas...Got Goat? Got Gas? Presented by our very own Donna Askins

(Calendar created and maintained by the Editor using data submitted by various people)

MEMBERSHIP CORNER

Please change Phyllis Grzywinski's e-mail address to pgrzywinski@yahoo.com

Please welcome these new members and paste them in your book:

Bordsen, John V.	1450 Plymouth Ln.	Elgin	60123	630-817-5646	Jbordsen@netscape.net
Bailey, Vivienne M.	26 Pioneer Park Pl.	Elgin	60123	847-697-1534	Pioneer2627@hotmail.com
Farnham, Keith/Susan	1000 N. Preston,#3	Elgin	60120	847-741-8087	krfarnham@gmail.com

(Janet Poyner, Membership Chair)

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Each year August 26th is designated as Women's Equality Day. First established in 1971, the date commemorates the passage of the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, which granted women full voting rights in 1920.

In 1848, at a women's club meeting in Seneca Falls, New York, Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony founded the National Woman Suffrage Association. For the next 70 years, women's clubs and many other social reform groups drew women into organizations and activities where women often applied the organizational skills learned in these other groups to the suffrage battle. Throughout the years, women continued to provide active leadership in other movements as well, such as health reform, prison reform and child labor reform. Their work in these groups helped build and demonstrate women's competence in the political realm.

The League of Women Voters is one of those organizations that grew out of the suffrage movement. In 1929 our own League of Women Voters of the Elgin Area was created.

Honor those women who worked tirelessly to bring equality to all U.S. citizens by celebrating their achievements with us August 19th at 6 pm at the Gail Borden Public Library. We encourage you to bring your friends to this very special showing of the film "*Iron Jawed Angels*" which chronicles the struggle of Alice Paul and Lucy Burns who risked their very lives to assure our rights.

Honoring those before us,

Sigi Psimenos

PROGRAM NOTES

The recipe for a fabulous summer potluck is simple: Start with a beautiful setting, add sumptuous food and drink provided by more than 30 fabulous League members and blend a lively discussion of the Illinois Budget with Sen. Mike Noland, Rep. Keith Farnham, and Todd Dietterle of Illinois Common Cause. The result was both nourishing and thought provoking! It's easy to see why this midsummer tradition continues to be a perennial favorite.

We'll be gathering again on *August 19th* to honor the women who led the way to the passage of the 19th Amendment. "*Iron Jawed Angels*" focuses on 2 defiant women--Alice Paul and Lucy Burns--who broke from the mainstream women's rights movement and created a more radical wing. Their motto: lead, follow, or get out of the way. They, and others, dared to push the boundaries of political protest to secure women's voting rights, putting their lives at risk the entire way. We can learn a lot from them for today's struggles!

But Wait...There's more!!!! This month's activities will conclude with our final Summer Patio Chat. *August 31st* U.S. Rep. Bill Foster will join us for a summer salad supper and libations in what surely will be another highlight of the summer.

As you all know, preparations are underway for the 2010 Census. John Bordsen, Chair, of the LWVEA Census Committee is busy preparing and will have preliminary information for us at our next Board meeting scheduled for *September 1st*. Remember these meetings are open to all members.

Details for these events can be found on the Voter Calendar (Thank You Dennis) and in Janet Poyner's weekly updates (Thank You Janet).

Sigi Psimenos

COMMUNITY DIALOGUE ON STATE BUDGET CRISIS – September 22, 2009

The local **Voices for Illinois Children** Leadership Committee will hold this critical event on September 22, 2009 at 7 pm at Streamwood High School. Sean Noble, who is currently in charge of government relations for **Voices**, will be the facilitator/moderator. He is a former school beat reporter for the Elgin Courier News (1994-1998). This event is designed to continue to educate citizens on the state budget crisis—which will only continue to worsen until a long-term, sustainable source of new revenue is found to pay past due bills, unpaid pension liabilities, and new debt passed into next year's budget cycle. Please mark you calendars and look for more information about this important event. LWVEA is co-sponsoring as well as providing voter registrars.

(Laurel Bault)

CLIMATE CHANGE COMMITTEE

ECCO meets the 4th Tuesday of every month at ITN Deli at 185 N. Edison; program is at 7pm with a supper (optional) preceding it at 6pm for \$5. The August meeting is on the 25th. We hope to have Mary Alice Stewart of Environment Illinois present a short program on what Environment Illinois is doing and what legislation is in the works. (ITN = In The Neighborhood)

As always, the ECCO board meetings are open to the public every other Monday; the next one is on August 17 at ITN Deli at 9am. Come find out what we are working on and help us get the word out about more ways to go green!

Also, check out the Elgin Harvest market where ECCO has a booth every Thursday from 10-4. Still 2 free CFL light bulbs per visit! Nearby, other environmental folks are showing their products or how they do things! Lots of locally grown produce and other products to support nearby communities and decrease the carbon footprint associated with transportation. Call Sandy Kaptain 847-741-7375 for more ideas, details.

(Sandy Kaptain)

ILLINOIS STATE BUDGET CRISIS

As many of you are aware, the Illinois General Assembly did not pass a balanced budget on May 31st as required by our state constitution. Instead, \$3.5 billion was borrowed to pay pension liabilities and an additional \$3.5 billion hole was left to be filled. In essence, the “problem” was left to be dealt with after incumbents know whether they have an opponent for either the primary or general elections in 2010. For members of good government organizations, such as the League of Women Voters, this action must be taken seriously. Here are two websites to **update yourself on the number one advocacy issue of the League of Women Voters of Illinois for over 3 decades:**

Voices for Illinois Children State Budget Center can be found [here](#).

Center for Tax and Budget Accountability website can be found [here](#).

The Illinois General Assembly will be again be in Springfield for the veto session in October and then is off until January, 2010.

(Laurel Bault)

HEALTH CARE REFORM

Please support health care for all. I have a neighbor who cannot change jobs because of a daughter with a preexisting brain tumor. I have another neighbor who just broke his leg. Yes, the hospital fixed it, but due to his low income, he had no health care. He needs physical therapy for this bad break and, of course, this costs money as did his surgery--thousands and thousands of dollars. This young man is 31 years of age. His future is debt ridden and his job prospects are few.

There are many myths about the new coverage. I heard one woman on Medicare say her health care would be rationed and she would be required to sign a Do Not Resuscitate directive. It is true that the new legislation requires a service be available to explain the advanced directives in your state, but nowhere is the Do Not Resuscitate mandate included. If you do not have an advanced directive, you need one. They can be down loaded from the internet and they are legal. Another myth is rationing and lack of selection of your own physician. You already have rationing. Your insurance company limits your treatment options. In really complex cases they do this through nurse case managers who follow your case through phone contact. I know some of these people. Their cases are audited for profitability. If they are not making the correct decisions with clients, they are pressured or fired. So, while you feel you are free to make health care choices, does your policy pay for total and free care? Only the very high end policies, like the members of the U.S. congress and senate have, do that. Fortunately for you, perhaps you have never had a complex condition or wanted to go to a consultant or alternative health care practitioner. Insurance companies make over one-third of a trillion dollars each year.

Lastly, I would like to point out a common word I am hearing some politicians use to refer to the concept of universal health care--predatory. If this health care for all is predatory then Medicare is predatory. The current open market health care system really serves those who make the decisions rather than the patient. We have a system that works for part of our society no matter what they earn and we have a system that does not work for part of the society who earn too little.

Please consider the fairness of this situation. Many of the voices are strident and our ears are small. We need to listen to the small and powerless voices, as well as the loud, powerful and comfortable. Life is a real struggle for many and health care costs can bankrupt them for life.

Call your Representatives and Senators. It is time to act.

(Tana Durnbaugh)

EDUCATION COMMITTEE – Laurel Bault, Chair

Committee members continue to observe U-46 School Board Meetings to gather base-line information that will lead to recommended action when appropriate. To read reports, please go [here](#). Capacity and Facility reports, many new administrators, including new Chief Financial Officer in these critical times, all make League observation of board meetings critical.

(Laurel Bault)

(Laurel Bault submitted the two Education Committee Observer Reports which follow.)

League of Women Voters of the Elgin Area Observer Report

MEETING: School Board – Elgin U-46

DATE: June 22, 2009

League Member Observer: Laurel Bault

Elected Officials Absent: none

Was press in attendance? Yes No

Press leaves early to meet deadlines.

Did the press cover the significant issues? Yes No ***

Press covered the Superintendent contract extension only. The District Improvement Plan enhancements are key to community support, yet the press didn't cover. Please see <http://www.u-46.org/> for more on these important changes.

SUMMARY OF MEETING and CRITICAL ISSUES

New Canton Middle School Principal introduced.

Revenue – John Prince reported that cash reserves are soon to be an issue without a state budget crisis resolution.

Citizens Advisory Reports – Family and Community Involvement Report was given. Much of the same information that has been given for years. The observer is hopeful that the new Family and Community Engagement pillar in the District Improvement Plan will indeed have action steps and measurable goals for this critical pillar. All the CAC reports can be found at www.u46cac.org.

District Improvement Plan Report by Dr. Torres – The District Improvement Plan has been sharpened into 5 pillars from six, each with more specific and measurable goals. Again, can be found at <http://www.u-46.org/>. The new pillars are:

1. **Teaching, Learning, Leadership**
2. **Recognition and Interventions**
3. **Operational Excellence**
4. **Accountability**
5. **Family and Community Engagement**

Concerns: In 2006, all 40 elementary schools made Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), in 2007, 39 of the same schools and in 2008, only 19. Note though, that the state of Illinois failed to replace the IMAGE test (second language learner test) with an accepted testing device; and this forced all second language learners to take the ISAT test instead.

New actions that will be taken in 2009/2010 include reorganizing administration to serve schools better by removing middle layers, new staffing standards at elementary school (lowering class size), realigning resources to create teacher-leader positions, many middle school enhancements and further study of dual language program to consider full implementation across the district.

COMMENTS/NOTES:

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Continue awareness of budget shortfalls.

NEXT MEETING: July 20, 2009

League of Women Voters of the Elgin Area Observer Report

MEETING: School Board – Elgin U-46

DATE: August 3, 2009

League Member Observer: Laurel Bault

Elected Officials Absent: Amy Kerber, Joyce Fountain, Adam Boston (Student)

Was press in attendance? Yes No

Press leaves early to meet deadlines.

Did the press cover the significant issues? Yes No ***

Covered contract resolution for non-union administrators led by Torres's refusal of pay raise.

SUMMARY OF MEETING and CRITICAL ISSUES

Three Public Hearings: \$15m in Fire/Safety Bonds, Limited Tax Tort Bonds and Kane County Vocational System Budget. All three opened and closed with no comment

New Chief Financial Officer - [Dr. Ronald Ally](#) was introduced. A product of U-46 schools and graduate of Larkin High School, you can read more about Dr. Ally at the link above.

Summer Learning 2009 – reports for each program, from SAFE (350 students at 3 sites) through High School Credit Recovery program. Programs served about 50% fewer students due to lack of funding.

Board meetings going green! A portion of the meeting was Board Docs training of board members – a web-based management system that will eventually eliminate the need for paper board packets.

COMMENTS/NOTES:

Two noteworthy comments from citizens:

1. **Bus issues at Channing Elementary** – second time an issue for this child--wrong stop in May--busses left without 20 to 30 students first day in July--mom was hoping to help eliminate the need to return!
2. **Harassment issues at Horizon** – both inside and outside school hours. Torres intervened as parents are very concerned for the safety of their daughter.

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Continue awareness of budget shortfalls due to lack of state funding.

NEXT MEETING: August 17, 2009

WALKING THE BIKE TRAIL

The Elgin League is committed to monitoring a section of the Fox River Bike Trail. Our task is to patrol the trail between Slade Avenue Park and Trout Park, periodically, weather permitting. When members walk the trail, the Elgin LWV earns credit for the volunteer hours. Those who walk the trail find all kinds of interesting stuff! Though usually there is not a ton of trash, each of us has now and then filled a small trash bag along the way.

Please call Ann Schneck at (847) 741-5088 for more information.

(Editor, in collaboration with **Ann Schneck**)

Progress Report from the Committee Exploring a Possible Merger with the Carpentersville Dundee LWV

This committee of Laurel Bault, Myra Becker, Barbara Mulliken, Sigi Psimenos and Dennis Schwank, chair, was created at the August Board meeting. We met at Myra's house July 27 to review the partially completed Merger Application sent to us by the Carpentersville Dundee LWV (hereinafter, CD). We reviewed their responses and polished our own. In addition, we discussed other aspects of the merger, based on the facts at hand. More facts and issues would be forthcoming at our meeting with CD on August 1. Only Barb and Dennis were available to attend that meeting.

That was a good meeting with progress made on many issues. The hope that a merger might happen very soon now appears unlikely: Two or three issues remain and we do not have everything written down that needs to be written down. So, our conclusion is to recommend that the two Leagues remain separate while we continue to work out and write down a **Merger Agreement**.

Some of the keys items discussed:

- According to LWVUS, CD must merge with Elgin while dissolving itself (LWVUS does the actual dissolution) in order to retain the money it has accumulated over the years. If the merger takes place, the retained funds (about \$3,000) would be turned over to Elgin. (If CD were to disband without merging with Elgin or some other LWV, its money would revert to LWVIL.)
- Elgin requested that the process of transferring the money, specifically, be written down, preferably by LWVIL or LWVUS, so that it is perfectly clear. In addition, Elgin wants to see written documentation of the entire merger process.
- Much of the CD money was acquired via fund-raising events during which contributors were told that the money would be used for Voter Guides and Candidate Forums in the municipalities where the money was raised. CD wants the money to be earmarked in the Elgin budget for voter services activity in what would be their former area of focus, perhaps with a five year limit placed on that earmark. Thenafter, the remaining funds would revert to the Elgin general fund. CD has typically spent about \$400 per election. One suggestion by Elgin was that the money might be placed in the Education Fund, held by LWVIL.
- CD members believe that they have earned a reputation for doing an excellent job with Voter Guides and Candidate Forums and that their communities have grown to depend on the LWV for these activities. They also point out that no other groups in the local areas served by CD have as yet undertaken Voter Guides or Candidate Forums. One or more newspapers may publish questions and answers from candidates for each community, but that may or may not continue.

It became obvious that this was only the first of several meetings that will need to be held in order to smooth over the bumps in the road. So long as both groups continue to desire this merger, discussions should continue. We may discover that we are, after-all, compatible and that the merger can move forward. Or, we may find that the money issue or some other concern amounts to an irreconcilable difference that renders the merger a no-go. We are close to meeting again. There are so many ducks to get in a row!

(Dennis Schwank)

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<p>The League of Women Voters, a non-partisan political organization, encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues and influences public policy through citizen education and advocacy.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">* * *</p> <p>The League of Women Voters of the Elgin Area invites you to become a member of this active, grass-roots oriented organization. Individual membership is \$45 and \$22.50 for each additional member at the same address. \$22.50 student membership. Please send bottom portion of this form with check payable to: LWVEA, 569 Franklin Blvd., Elgin, Il. 60120</p> <p>Name _____</p> <p>Address _____</p> <p>City, State, Zip _____</p> <p>Phone (home) _____ (work) _____</p> <p>Email _____</p>	<p>Kirkpatrick, Jones & Herzog Insurance Agency, Inc.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">William "Bill" Jones Proprietor</p> <p>19 S. Spring Street (847) 741-9393 P. O. Box 765 Fax (847) 741-9480</p>
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The Elgin Area League thanks our 2008-2009 Patrons for their support.



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