



Area

# VOTER

September 2010

## From the President

*Sigi Psimenos*

Lots of exciting projects as you scroll through this month's issue. Some are initiated by us, some we're participating in, and others we'd like to see happen. Then there are those that we're just shaking up a little.

This is proving to be a very, very exciting and productive year for all of us. Enjoy the read!

- On Sept. 30th @ 6PM, we'll be hosting the **Illinois Senate Candidates Night** with candidates Noland, Rauschenberger, Lauzen & Juby; and Oct.. 3rd @ 2PM for **Illinois Representatives** with candidates Farnham, Munson, Schmitz & Barconi - both to be held at the Gail Borden Public Library.

In the past, our Candidates Nights consisted of individual opening statements, public Q&A, and closing comments - each with a 2 minute time constraint. We've found that this sound-bite format neither served the candidates, nor the public, well. This year with the permission of the participating candidates, we'd like to

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offer a venue wherein real debate can take place between candidates. We'll be setting up a debate structure, within League guidelines, where topics of interest such as immigration, budget, and school funding can be discussed to greater depth, followed by public Q&A. We'll keep you updated on this process as we are still waiting to hear from candidates.

- Furthermore, to service our larger area, on Sept. 14th @ 7PM we'll be hosting our first **Candidate Night in Bartlett**, at the Bartlett Community Center. The focus will be on education with candidates Pierog, Miller, Ramey & Brownfield moderated by Leaguer **Janelle Walker**.
- Servicing our **Dundee-Rutland Township** area will be our **Candidates Forum** at the Dundee Senior Center the second week of October. Candidates for the 3 County Board seats, Treasurer, Sheriff, County Clerk and the 16th Judicial District will be represented and it will be moderated by Leaguer **Carol Grom**.
- AAUW has a program titled "**Women and the Courts**" to generate public awareness about the importance of the judicial branch which we'd love to undertake if you'd like to be involved.

- In this 90th anniversary year of the LWV, we're partnering with the YWCA in a project called "**Running for Public Office- A Woman's Focus**" that **Loni Mecum** is chairing from our end.
- We've received grant approval and are thrilled to host **Mock Elections** at 3 high schools: South Elgin, Larkin & Dundee-Crown the first week of October. We'll be using actual ballot machines and the ballots will contain the actual names of candidates for US Senate, Governor, and Congressional candidates. We are coordinating this with LWVIL, Kane County Elections, and Illinois Student Vote. This is the first Mock Election our local League has participated in and we look forward to giving students as close to an actual voting experience as possible. Our own **Wendy Covich** is chairing this committee, so please let us know if you'd like to participate.
- Our first in-depth study will be chaired by **Carol Grom** on the **potential gravel mining on the Brunner property** of the Kane County Forest Preserve.
- **Dr. Tana Durnbaugh** will be hosting a program on **how the new healthcare regulations affect us** on October 10th.
- On the same day, we will be partnering in a **worldwide event on climate change**; we participated last year, but this year the majority of LWV will be together on this. We thank **Sandy Kaptain** for staying on the forefront of this, and **Donna Askins** for organizing the Elgin Community Garden Network.



*From the Women's Journal, March 8, 1913: "Women were spit upon, slapped in the face, tripped up, pelted with burning cigar stubs, and insulted by jeers and obscene language too vile to print or repeat." Courtesy ibitmylip, Flickr.*

*Ninety-one years ago, as victory seemed imminent for the 19th Amendment, Carrie Chapman Catt proposed the founding of the League of Women Voters to "finish the fight." For 90 years, the League has kept that promise alive for each coming generation. Today, as a League supporter, you have the opportunity to continue to make a profound, direct and positive impact on the issues that matter most to our community and the generations to come.*

# Immigration Reform

*Loni Mecum*

On Tuesday, August 31, 2010, at 7:00 p.m. the League of Women Voters of the Elgin Area will host an **informational program for members regarding Comprehensive Immigration Reform** and what role we can play in support of the national and state Leagues of Women Voters' positions regarding this very important issue. The presentation will focus on the current legislative status of Comprehensive Immigration Reform. The need for local grass roots action will be reviewed and encouraged. This will include a request for the Elgin LWV to consider its own local response consistent with the positions taken by the national and state LWV.

Royce Blackwell and Shirley Sadjadi, members of the Elgin Ad Hoc Committee for Comprehensive Immigration Reform, will talk about the current status of immigration reform legislation in Congress, personal examples of inequities in the current law, and strategies to show support for change. A Question and Answer session will be included.

The program will be at Tyler Towers Clubhouse, 1450 Plymouth Lane, Elgin, Illinois. The clubhouse is a single-story building behind Tyler Towers.

All are invited to attend and learn more about this important issue which affects citizens as well as immigrants. For further information, contact [Loni Mecum](#).

*[Ellis Island photo courtesy of Benjamin Dumas, b00nj, Flickr](#)*



## Elgin SMP

# Outreach/Healthy Living Committee Update

*Sigi Psimenos*

The City of Elgin is developing a sustainable master plan with the help of 9 sub committees made up of Elgin residents. Several of us in the LWVEA are on one of these committees. Every month we'd like to provide you with an update of what we've been doing. I am on the Outreach & Healthy Living Committee and as such this is a synopsis of the goals we set at our meeting on August 10, 2010.

**Goal #1:** Educate the Community on the Value of Sustainability and work with each Working Group to create the message they want to convey

**Description and Purpose:** Through education, the community will begin to understand the basic concept of sustainability and begin to practice more sustainable living habits in their daily lives.

**Lead sector:** Although the government can be the facilitator of this effort, it must become a partnership between all key stakeholders and leaders in the community, including other taxing bodies, schools, business organizations, neighborhood organizations and not-for-profits.

**Objectives:**

- Increase vendor to Elgin's Green Expo by 50%
- Participate in at least 10 community events and 5 school events

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# Know Your Elections Calendar

Last Day to Register  
Tue., Oct. 5, 2010

Grace  
Period Registration  
Wed, Oct. 6, 2010  
through  
Tue., Oct. 26, 2010

Note: guidelines limit when and where  
grace period registrants can vote  
during this period.

Early Voting Period  
Mon., Oct. 11, 2010  
through  
Thurs., Oct. 28, 2010

Absentee Voting Period  
Thurs., Sept. 23, 2010  
through  
Mon., Nov. 1, 2010

General  
Election  
TUE., NOV. 2,  
2010



# Mental Health Committee Update

*Darlene Bakk*

The Mental Health Committee met on August 24th to determine the scope of its 2010-11 project.

The discussion focused on the League furthering its knowledge on services and housing for persons with mental illness examining safety issues in nursing homes as well as how the nursing homes are implementing the new reform legislation passed last spring. Also discussed were plans on updating our information on Kane County mental health courts.

The next meeting will be at Myra Becker's on Tuesday, September 7, at 4 p.m. Please come join us!

E-mail [darlenebakk@yahoo.com](mailto:darlenebakk@yahoo.com) or call Myra at 847-741-2780 for more information.

## Beyond Repair: True Stories of Illinois' Flawed Death Penalty

*Tuesday, September 14, 7:00 pm,*

*at the St. Charles Public Library*

On Tuesday, September 14, 7:00 pm, at the St. Charles Public Library, the Illinois Coalition for the Abolition of the Death Penalty in partnership with the League of Women Voters of Central Kane County and local congregations, will present "Beyond Repair: True Stories of Illinois' Flawed Death Penalty".

This live presentation will feature compelling testimony of men who were wrongfully convicted and later freed from our state's death row, like Randy Steidl of Charleston, Illinois, who was released in 2004 when evidence emerged that he had been framed after spending 17 years on death row. Other speakers will include family members of murder victims like Cathy Crino, whose sister was murdered in 1995.

For years we have struggled against our unjust and fatally flawed death penalty, looking forward to when repeal would be within reach. Now is the time! After ten years of moratorium we've reached a tipping point. It's become clear that no reform can fix our broken death penalty system. At a time when so many communities are starving for resources, legislators are willing to cut broken programs. After seeing 20 innocent men walk free from Illinois' death row - we are ready to stand up and say "Enough Already!"



For more information, contact ICADP organizer Liz Moran at (312) 673 - 3880, [liz@icadp.org](mailto:liz@icadp.org) or visit the web site at [www.icadp.org](http://www.icadp.org).

# GOVERNMENTAL FORUM on Social Service Issues

*Janet Poyner, MIDD Committee*

On September 16, a Coalition of Kane County social services, including the League of Women Voters, will be holding a forum to speak directly to officials and candidates for the state, Kane County Board, city, village and township public offices regarding the needs and concerns of all social services.

Please be a part of this endeavor by your attendance to show your support for these agencies. The program begins at 6:00 p.m. at the Christ Community Church (off Randall Road on Bolcum Road) in St. Charles. The facility is ADA accessible. Be sure to wear your "League of Women Voters" badge, if you have one, to let our legislators and candidates know we are there participating. Bodies are so important in numbers even if you do not become actively involved in the discussion.

For any information on this event, please call me at 847-695-7122.



## League of Women Voters of the Elgin Area **POLITICAL ACTIVITY POLICY**

The purpose of the League of Women Voters is to promote political responsibility through informed and active participation in government. The League takes action on governmental measures and policies in the public interest. It does not, however, support or oppose any political party or candidate.

The following policy proscribes the political activity of board members, subject to the approval of the board.

1. The President and the Voters' Service Chairperson may not run for election to a partisan or nonpartisan governmental office nor engage in any political activity for the duration of their terms.
2. Board members who participate in any form of partisan political activity do so as individuals and shall not imply League support of their involvement.
3. Board members shall not take leadership in groups concerned with issues where conflict with League positions occurs.

Prospective board members shall be informed of this policy at the time they are asked to serve and shall receive a copy.

If there is any question regarding the appropriateness of a board member's activity or proposed activity, it shall be brought before the board.

The interpretation and application of this nonpartisanship policy should always be subject to review of the League board.

Adopted 8-4-80, 5-5-92, 8-95, 8-7-06, 8-19-10;  
Amended 8-20-01, 8-03, 10-8-08

# Elgin SMP Alternative Energy Update

Wendy Covich

The Alternative Energy subcommittee has also been busy these past months. We've had speakers in to educate our group on alternative energy options such as solar, vertical axis wind power, hydropower possibilities on the Fox River, and geothermal systems. We've manned a booth to educate the public at the Green Expo and the Sustainable Governance Conference. On August 17th, we took to the stage at Gail Borden Public Library to present for the Elgin Alive! Series.

This week we've been meeting to flesh out a limited number of our group's goals and objectives. To give you an idea of some of the concepts we'll be refining, I've included an informal list of some of the goals we have been discussing:

- We are very interested in hydropower on the Fox River. We have learned in our research that the Kimball Street Dam is one of only two on the entire river that will never be removed, because of its importance to the City's water supply. The process for this is long and involved; we're sure it'll be controversial, as well, but we really do think its important to take advantage of opportunities for alternative energy that are unique to Elgin.
- We think its important to encourage & increase the use of renewable energy by the city of Elgin and its residents and businesses by becoming a Green Power Community. There are not many recognized in the US and it'd be a great way for the community to get on board. We are looking at the [GoGreenAurora campaign](#) and hope to initiate something like this locally.
- We'd like to further explore and promote the use of alternative energy systems (geothermal, PV solar, solar heat, fuel cell, and small vertical wind) throughout Elgin.
- Look into utilizing alternative fuel systems (hybrid, bio-diesel, CNG, all electric, etc) for replacing municipal fleet vehicles (trucks, cars, other heavy equipment) when they reach of end of life. Encourage the community to look to their own vehicles and explore options for alternative fuel systems.
- We'd like to facilitate the grassroots organization of Elgin area residential and commercial property owners to obtain volume discounts for energy audits, energy conservation improvements, and installation of more energy efficient heating, cooling, hot water, and lighting systems, including alternative and renewable energy technologies. Something like [One Block Off the Grid's program](#) can make this possible.



## REGIONAL TRAINING WORKSHOPS

September 25

Here is an opportunity to network with colleagues in other Leagues. Those responsible for membership (database, programming events and recruiting and retaining members), communications (webmaster, newsletter and public relations) or finances are encouraged to attend. 3 workshops are scheduled from 9:30 to 11:30 am, Saturday, September 25th at: Arlington Heights Historical Society, LaGrange Public Library or Bloomington hosted by [Joni Painter](#). To form a carpool, please call Membership Chair [Janet Poyner](#) at 847-695-7122 if interested.



# League of Women Voters of Illinois

Special Invitation: August 19, 2010

Website: [www.lwvil.org](http://www.lwvil.org)

**Redistricting  
Training: Sept. 15**

**RSVP by Sept. 7**

*For more information  
contact:*

Redistricting Project  
Coordinator

**Mary Schaafsma**  
[marys@lwvil.org](mailto:marys@lwvil.org)  
312.939.5935 x-39

## Redistricting and the LWVIL

- Redistricting remains a top priority for the LWVIL.
- We continue to devote time and resources to this important issue.
- As you know, Illinois will be redistricted in 2011.
- We want all League members to be informed about the process.
- Outreach to local League communities is a critical part of our public education campaign.

## JOIN US

### Redistricting: A Training Opportunity

**Wednesday, September 15, 2010 \* 1:30 to 4:00 p.m.**

League of Women Voters of Illinois  
332 South Michigan Avenue · Suite 1150  
Chicago, Illinois 60604

Meet Our  
Project Coordinator



**Mary Schaafsma**  
[marys@lwvil.org](mailto:marys@lwvil.org)

### Why We Need You to Attend the LWVIL Training:

- Hear more about why this issue is still so critical
- Listen to people who have been involved in prior redistricting, including **Virginia Martinez of MALDEF**, recipient of the LWVIL 2010 Citizen of Action Award
- Learn how you can educate both your league and community
- Leave prepared to make a public education presentation
- Receive your LWVIL Redistricting Toolkit

**Refreshments will be provided**



*Continued from page 3*

**Goal #2:** To promote healthy eating habits and sustainable food practices.

**Description and Purpose:** Educate the community about the basic concept of healthy eating and sustainable food practices in general.

**Lead sector:** Garden clubs, health organizations, hospitals, schools

**Objectives:**

- Have 20 Community Gardens by end of 2011
- Have 5 local restaurants add at least one menu item locally and seasonally grown
- Change meal programs at local schools to include at least one healthy menu item that is locally grown

**Goal #3:** Create recognition program for local businesses who are utilizing “green” and sustainable practices

**Description and Purpose:** The purpose of a recognition program is to highlight good examples of local businesses who have integrated sustainable practices into their operations and use them as a teaching tool for other local businesses to learn from.

**Lead sector:** Business community

**Objectives:**

- Create weekly column to highlight local businesses
- Create award program that will be given out at Green Expo

**Goal #4:** Create Educational Center at ROPE House

**Description and Purpose:** The purpose of an educational center at the new ROPE house is to provide a hands on exhibit that will teach homeowners about improvements that can be made to older homes that will make their house more energy efficient and incorporate overall best practices for sustainable living.

**Objectives:**

- Involve each of the 9 working groups in providing material and information for exhibit

**Goal #5:** Create a network of information between and among the working groups, with the Community Education Working Group serving as the hub for collection and dissemination of information to one another.

**Objectives:**

- Involve each of the 9 working groups in providing material and information for exhibit



# Speak Out

★ **Be Heard** ★

## Governmental Forum On Social Service Issues

**Date:** Thursday, September 16, 2010

**Time:** 6:00 pm to 8:30 pm

**Location:** Christ Community Church  
37W100 Bolcum Road (off Randall Road)  
St. Charles, IL 60175 (Facility ADA accessible)

### Featuring:

Updates on local service needs and concerns

Opportunity to state your position on social service issues

Speak directly to officials and candidates for state, Kane County Board, city, village, and township public offices

### Please RSVP to Gina Richter

847-515-8998 or [ginar\\_30@sbcglobal.net](mailto:ginar_30@sbcglobal.net)

\*If you'd like to have your question asked to the local and state officials please e-mail it to [ginar\\_30@sbcglobal.net](mailto:ginar_30@sbcglobal.net)

### Sponsored by:

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Fox Valley Special Recreation Association

Gateway Foundation

League of Women Voters

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Mental Health and Mental Retardation Services, Inc

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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.

\* \* \*

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 \$60 and \$90 for each additional member at the same address. \$30 student membership. Please send this coupon with your payment payable to:  
LWVEA, 569 Franklin Blvd., Elgin, Il. 60120

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**The Elgin Area League thanks our  
2010-2011 Patrons for their support**



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