



# BULLETIN

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF WILMETTE

www.lwvwilmette.org

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Vol. 68., No. 7

September 2008

DEMOCRACY IS NOT A SPECTATOR SPORT

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## Leagues of Women Voters Sponsor Tenth District Congressional Debate Between Mark Kirk and Dan Seals

Sunday, October 19, 2008

2:00 – 3:30 p.m.

Deerfield High School  
1959 North Waukegan Road  
Deerfield, IL

## Volunteer and Hear a Great Debate on the Issues Facing the Tenth Congressional District and our Nation!

In 2006, the Kirk/Seals debate was standing room only! The Wilmette League of Women Voters is again co-sponsoring the Tenth District Debate. We have agreed to provide ushers and question screeners. If you are interested in **volunteering** for either one of these roles, please contact Heidi Voorhees, Voter Services Chair at 847-256-7299 or by e-mail at heidijvoorhees@aol.com.

Sponsored by:

*The Leagues of Women Voters of the Tenth Congressional District*  
Cosponsoring Organizations: *The Union League Club of Chicago,*  
*North Suburban Voices Leadership Committee, Childcare Coalition of*  
*Lake County, and the YWCA of Lake County*

**This program is funded by the  
League of Women Voters Education Fund.**

## *PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE*

**We have so much to do and so little time in which to do it!!!** This familiar refrain aptly describes the League's situation.

November 4, 2008 is less than six weeks away!!! Between now and then **your** League will be doing everything possible to promote an **informed electorate** that will 'turn out' to vote on Election Day.

We will be working hard to get our fellow citizens, especially our newest (18 year old) voters and our new neighbors, registered to vote.

We will co-sponsor numerous candidate forums that will provide constituents the opportunity to ask questions and, of course, listen to the prospective legislators.

We will co-sponsor a major community-wide program to educate fellow citizens as to why the League of Women Voters advocates a "NO" vote on whether a state Constitutional Convention should be called.

We will join with the LWV of Cook County and participate in the Poll Reporting Project on Election Day.

However, League volunteers are needed to assist with each of these important endeavors. As you read through this newsletter, you will find requests for volunteer help. Please select one (or more) of these key Election 2008 projects and . . . STEP UP! After all, that's what the League of Women Voters is all about!

As always, I welcome YOUR feedback, ideas and/or suggestions.

Libby Bankoff

## PROGRAM NOTES

**On Friday, November 7**, (yes, three days after the election), a group of your Wilmette League friends will be attending a Chicago Humanities Festival roundtable on the 2008 election results from 12-1:30 P.M. at the Thorne Auditorium, Northwestern University School of Law. Fee is \$5.

If you would like to join us in this "hair of the dog" activity, go to [www.chfestival.org](http://www.chfestival.org) or call 312-494-9509 for tickets. Still have a question? Call Georgia Gebhardt at (847)853-8225 or email at [ggebhardt@sbcglobal.net](mailto:ggebhardt@sbcglobal.net).

## How Will You Vote on the Illinois Constitutional Convention Ballot Question on November 4?

The League of Women Voters of Illinois urges you to vote NO!

**Learn more**

**Tuesday, October 14 at 7:30 p.m.**

**New Trier Northfield Campus**

**7 Happ Road, Building C, Room 234**

**Guest speakers:**

**Dawn Clark Netsch and**

**Julie Hamos, 18th District State Representative**

Dawn Clark Netsch is a former state senator and former State Comptroller. She was also a delegate at the last Constitutional Convention in 1970. The purpose of this event is to advocate for the League's position against a Constitutional Convention. Encourage your friends and neighbors to attend!!

## TRAINING SESSION—ADVOCATE AGAINST CON-CON

The Evanston League will sponsor a session to train League members to advocate against a constitutional convention on Saturday, **Oct. 4** from **10 A.M. to Noon**, at First Bank & Trust of Evanston. Mary Lou Aargaard, who has great expertise in this area, will conduct the training. If you are interested in participating, please contact Karen Hunt (President of the Evanston League) at [Khunt@firstbt.com](mailto:Khunt@firstbt.com) or phone at (847)733-7400.

### Welcome New Members!

A warm welcome to our two newest League members, Anne Treadway and Patsy Schiff.

Our 2008-2009 Directory will go to press soon, and we don't want to leave anyone out. **Please renew your League membership now.**

If you have misplaced your form, you can download a membership form at the League's website -- [www.lwvwilmette.org](http://www.lwvwilmette.org). Just click "Join LWV", print and fill out the form, and mail it to LWV-Wilmette, P.O. Box 432, Wilmette, IL 60091.

## *ILLINOIS LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS*

### *A Constitutional Convention Fact Sheet*

**An important question will appear on the November, 2008 ballot. Should the State of Illinois convene a Constitutional Convention in 2009?**

#### **Why will this be on the ballot?**

*Section 1, Constitutional Convention (b) "If a question of whether a Convention should be called is not submitted during any twenty-year period, the Secretary of State shall submit such question at the general election in the twentieth year following the last submission." (from the present constitution of the State of Illinois)*

Since the last submission was 1988, the question must appear on the ballot this year.

**The League of Women Voters of Illinois opposes holding a Constitutional Convention (Con-Con) at this time.** This was the consensus of local leagues who conducted a close study of the current Constitution and the pros and cons of a convention. The major points in support of the **NO** position are listed below for your consideration.

- We believe the present constitution is serving the citizens of Illinois and may be changed using the amendatory process where necessary.
- Many unresolved State issues can be addressed by direct legislative action. A dysfunctional government is the problem, not the current constitution.
- A constitutional convention would open the entire document to change. Citizens might find, at the end of the process, that problems have been aggravated, not solved.
- \$75,000,000 is the conservative estimate of the cost to taxpayers. The State can ill afford this expenditure.
- There has been a serious lack of preparation, and little public information has been provided to citizens. This means that there is insufficient time to educate voters adequately on the complexities of the issue. Revising a constitution is a matter requiring serious study.
- The current problems experienced in Springfield are due to a lack of leadership and political will, not a weakness in the 1970 Constitution.

The State General Assembly will control the delegate selection process and set the parameters for the convention itself. Who among us believes that this body is prepared to administer a fair, nonpartisan convention? In the present political climate, it is highly likely that the process would be dominated by narrow interest groups and party politics.

#### **The following organizations join us in urging a NO vote on the Con-Con question:**

Center for Tax & Budget Accountability	Illinois Chamber of Commerce
Illinois Education Association	Illinois Federation of Teachers
Illinois Farm Bureau	Illinois Retired Teachers Assoc.
National Federation of Independent Businesses	Illinois AFL-CIO

**COOK COUNTY STATE'S ATTORNEY FORUM**  
**SPONSORED BY**  
**THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF COOK COUNTY AND ABC/CHANNEL 7**

The LWVCC and ABC/Channel 7 are co-sponsoring a forum featuring the candidates for Cook County State's Attorney. The candidates are Anita Alvarez - Democratic Candidate, Tony Peraica - Republican Candidate, and Thomas O'Brien - Green Party Candidate.

The forum will be taped on **October 23 at 7p.m.** at which time it will also be running live on the Channel 7/ABC website as well as their cable access channel. It will be televised on Channel 7 on either Saturday or Sunday, November 1 or 2 (time TBD).

Volunteers are needed to help the evening of the taping and there will be a limited number seats for observers in the studio during the taping. If you would like to volunteer please call the Cook County League office at **312-939-5935 x27**.

We also will be helping to formulate the questions for the moderated forum so if you have a question about the Cook County State's Attorney office that you would like addressed please submit it either by calling the League office or emailing your questions to [cook@lwvil.org](mailto:cook@lwvil.org).

**Leagues of Women Voters Sponsor Candidate Forums**

A candidate forum featuring candidates running for the Illinois 17<sup>th</sup> Legislative District and the Illinois Ninth Legislative District is scheduled for **Sunday, October 26 at the Wilmette Village Hall, located at 1200 Wilmette Avenue in Wilmette. Volunteers are needed to serve as ushers, timekeepers and question screeners.**

The forum is sponsored by Leagues of Women Voters for Wilmette, Northfield, Kenilworth, Winnetka, Glenview and Evanston and will give voters an opportunity to ask candidates questions.

The first forum will be held from 1:30 p.m. – 2:30 p.m. with candidates for the 17<sup>th</sup> District, Republican Elizabeth Coulson and Democrat Daniel Biss. Candidates will make opening statements and then will discuss the issues facing the 17<sup>th</sup> District and the State of Illinois. Audience members may submit questions for the candidates to address.

The second forum is scheduled for 3 p.m. to 4 p.m. for candidates for the Ninth Legislative District, Democrat Jeffrey Schoenberg and Republican Brendan Appel. Mr. Appel has agreed to participate in the forum. As of this time, Senator Schoenberg has not responded to requests for his participation in the forum. It is the policy of the League of Women Voters that both candidates must agree to participate or the forum cannot be held.

## **YOU ARE NEEDED AS AN ELECTION JUDGE**

**Please consider being an election judge for the November 4 election.** Half of the over 300 precincts surveyed as part of the Cook County League's Poll Reporting Project for the February Primary had fewer than the 5 judges called for, so the need is very real. If you can't be a judge, please recruit friends and family members for this important role in making democracy work.

**What Is Required:** You must be a registered voter and be able to serve on election day from 5 a.m. until the results are tabulated and all the equipment is stored back into the big blue box, which usually takes a couple of hours past the 7 p.m. poll closing time. You may be asked to go to your polling place the evening before the election to help set up the polling place (which will make the next morning much less stressful). You must also attend a training session, and you will be given an election judge manual to study. There is additional training if you are willing to be an equipment manager.

**What You'll Be Paid:** \$170 (assuming you attend the training session and work a full day). There is additional pay if you are a supply judge, an equipment manager, or if you are one of two judges who returns the ballot bag to the receiving station.

**How to Apply if You Live in Suburban Cook County:** Contact your Republican or Democratic township committee person if you live in suburban Cook County. For a list of Democratic and Republican township committee persons, go to [www.voterinfonet.com](http://www.voterinfonet.com) and click on Directory of Elected Officials near the top on the right-hand side of the page, then click on Party Officials, and then click on either Republican or Democratic Township Committeemen.

Alternatively, you can fill out an election judge application online at [www.voterinfonet.com](http://www.voterinfonet.com), (click on the tab Programs at the top and then click on election judges), and the Cook County Clerk will forward your application to the appropriate township committee person. By law, the Democratic and Republican parties initially select people to be election judges, and then the Cook County Clerk will fill remaining vacancies beginning 45 days prior to the election.

**Some Useful Tips:** Besides studying the election judge manual thoroughly ahead of time, wear comfortable clothes. You'll be helping to set up and take down voting equipment, as well as sitting much of the day. Bring some reading material for slow times. Bring lots of water, as well as food. You'll be given time for lunch, but it is often easier to have food with you. Also, while you can take time to go vote in your home precinct, it is probably easier if you take advantage of early voting.

**Student Judges:** There is a special program for high school juniors and seniors to be judges if they have a 3.0 out of 4.0 GPA and permission of a parent or guardian and the principal. The students do not need to be 18, but they serve the full day and are paid the same as regular judges. Go to [www.voterinfonet.com](http://www.voterinfonet.com) and click on the Programs tab at the top and then on High School Democracy Programs for more information and applications.

**Questions??** Cook County suburban residents, contact Cook County Clerk David Orr at [www.voterinfonet.com](http://www.voterinfonet.com), call the Election Judge Department at **(312) 603-0965** or e-mail [electjudge@cookcountygov.com](mailto:electjudge@cookcountygov.com).

## **Election Updates...**

### **Voter Registration**

The Wilmette League of Women Voters has been very busy registering voters for the upcoming election. Our activities include:

**Wilmette Public Library : Saturday, September 27, 1:30 – 4:30**

**New Trier High School : Friday, September 26, Monday, September 29**

### **Absentee/Early Voting**

#### **How to Vote Absentee**

Eligible absentee voters can cast ballots by mail or in person before election day. To obtain an absentee application, registered suburban Cook County voters can:

- Download and print the application ([www.voterinfont.com](http://www.voterinfont.com))
- Call the Clerk's office at (312) 603-0906

**Write or visit the Clerk's downtown Chicago office (69 W. Washington St., 5th floor, Chicago, IL 60602)**

#### **Mail-in absentee voting**

After you complete the absentee ballot application, the Cook County Clerk's office will determine if you are eligible to receive a mail-in absentee ballot.

If so, the Clerk's office will send you a mail-in absentee ballot. All absentee voters who vote by mail will cast optical scan ballots.

After making your selections, mail or deliver the ballot to the Clerk's office, which will forward it to your polling place to be counted on Election Day.

#### **Absentee voter assistance**

Voters who are blind, physically disabled or unable to read or write English may receive assistance voting their absentee ballot from a friend or relative. The voter and the person providing assistance must complete and sign an affidavit provided in the absentee balloting materials.

Only the voter, a relative (spouse, parent, child, brother or sister) or authorized messenger/delivery company may handle a voted ballot.

#### **Early Voting**

Illinois voters may take advantage of early voting which allows voters to vote before the election without having a reason or an excuse. Early voting will begin on **October 13 and conclude on October 30**. Early voting sites in this area are:

**Wilmette – Mallinckrodt Community Center, 1041 Ridge Road**

**Evanston – Evanston Civic Center, 2100 Ridge Avenue**

**Hours for both locations: 8:30 – 5 p.m., Monday through Friday and 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturday.**

#### **2008-2009 League of Women Voters of Wilmette Board Members**

<b>President</b>	Libby Bankoff	<b>Programs</b>	Georgia Gebhardt	<b>Voter Services</b>	Heidi Voorhees
<b>Secretary</b>	Susan Berghoef		Dorothy Speidel		Donna Doberstein
<b>Treasurer</b>	Susan Morrison			<b>Publicity</b>	Judy Mandel
<b>Membership/ Recruitment</b>	Ellen Falkof	<b>Student Government</b>	Deena Mitchell	<b>Web Master</b>	Beth Nyhan
	Therese Steinken		Bobbie Friedman	<b>Bulletin Editor</b>	Dale Cohodes

## Poll Reporting Project

The Cook County LWV is again planning a Poll Reporting Project for Election Day, November 4. The Project survey is designed so that participants may both observe and talk to the election judges to record the survey information requested.

After all the surveys are compiled, the information will be shared with Cook County Clerk David Orr's office. The last Poll Reporting Project took place during the Feb. 5, 2008 primary election. League members surveyed 319 precincts. The results of this poll reporting survey showed that one of the biggest challenges to making the voting process work is attracting a sufficient number of election judges. Over 50% of the precincts surveyed had less than the full 5-judge complement.

Please contact our Voter Service Director, Heidi Voorhees (HeidiJVoorhees@aol.com), if you are willing and able to take a few hours on Election Day to assist us with this important poll reporting effort.

## Applause

*Many thanks to Lali Watt and Stephanie Phelan, who have jumped onto the Student Government Committee with great enthusiasm! Lali is coordinating the program with the WJHS, and Stephanie is coordinating with St. Joseph and St. Francis.*

## We Remember.....

It is with sadness that we note that several of our fellow League members have passed in the past few months. All three were vital, active members of our League. Each will be missed.

**Ruth Goldman** A woman of great accomplishment and a passionate worker for civil rights and fairness, Ruth was a member of our League, of the New Trier Democratic Organization, and a recent docent at Oriental Institute. Ruth was part of the early cadre of women who chose law school and worked with a firm that always fought for civil rights. At the same time she was devoted to her children and especially to her husband Harold who predeceased her by about a year. She was a willing worker, and a marvelous companion in all the projects she shared. Her spirit and energy will be missed.

**Jean McConnell** was a gracious, artistic lady with a curiosity and sense of humor about life. She was one of those long-time Wilmette Leaguers who was always ready to help when asked. She was an active member of the League's Observer Corps, covering local governmental boards. She was a regular at consensus meetings and brown bag lunches. At one time, before this newsletter was online, Jean was responsible for collating, labeling and mailing over 200 copies to our membership. But, perhaps what most of us remember best about Jean's role with our League was her many years of coordinating our annual UNICEF holiday card sales. Not only did she choose the cards to order, and arrange their attractive display but she unflinchingly took on the daunting task of recruiting volunteers for the 72 time slots necessary for the three-week sale. She always succeeded!

**Marvin Miller** Marvin Miller, our dear Board member, and former Treasurer, was a constant fighter for the rights of all. His devotion to fair and accessible housing through the Interfaith Housing Center of the Northern Suburbs and to a wise Supreme Court permeated all his communications. He was an active force in all of the groups he supported, including the New Trier Democratic Organization. He was the first guy who was delighted to join our Board! His voice and humor will be missed.

## *Student Government Update*

The student Government program is cruising along, with our kick-off on Thursday evening, **October 2, from 6 – 7:15 pm** at Village Hall. State Representative Julie Hamos will speak at this event, with Village President Chris Canning doing an introduction and welcome as well.

This year we are adding back school-specific “mini” breakfasts to this program. We will need volunteers to help with these four events (exact dates are still being worked out), which will be held at St. Francis, St. Joseph, Marie Murphy and Wilmette Junior High School. If you might be interested in helping at any of these breakfasts, please contact Deena Mitchell at 847-853-0316 or [DeenaMitchell@hotmail.com](mailto:DeenaMitchell@hotmail.com).

## **Illinois Student Vote News**

The LWV of Illinois received a grant from the US Election Assistance Commission to conduct mock elections using real voting equipment in a number of high schools across the state.

**New Trier**, one of the participating high schools, is scheduled to hold their mock election on **November 4**. The students will be using touch screen computerized machines and will have the opportunity to vote for President, U.S. Senate, and the Illinois Constitutional Convention question. League members will receive an email soon with more information about how to help.

In addition, all 116 high schools in the Chicago public schools are holding mock elections from Sept. 30 – Oct. 3. The Chicago Mock Election program is an initiative of the LWVIL, the Chicago Public Schools and the Chicago Board of Elections. The League will be also registering 18 year old students to vote. The League needs volunteers to serve as “Mock Election officials.”

What’s involved?

- Volunteer at a participating Chicago school on September 30, October 1, 2 or 3.
- Be present at the school from 9:30 a.m. until 2:30 p.m.
- Attend a 60 minute training session prior to the Mock Election.
- You do not need to be a trained voter registrar to participate.

Your volunteer time and skill will help us pass the torch of democratic participation to the next generation. Contact the Illinois Student Vote Coordinator, Bob Fuller, by email at [bfuller@lwvil.org](mailto:bfuller@lwvil.org) or call 312-939-5935 x 39

## *LWVIL Testimony on School Funding September 2008*

The League of Women Voters Illinois believes that schools should be provided stable, reliable, and adequate revenue through a combination of federal, state, and local sources. That schools are currently funded in a manner that is heavily weighted on local resources, creating a disparity in quality based on local property wealth, is unacceptable.

The League recognizes that the current method of taxation is regressive, bringing to bear a heavier tax burden on the lowest-earning 20% of Illinois households. We support a graduated income tax as a preferable method of taxation rather than the current flat income tax.

However, until such time as a progressive income tax is a reality, Illinois needs a tax policy that will balance the inequities of tax burden and that will address the inequities of funding that doom schools to what their property tax base can support rather than what is needed to supply a quality education for the population they serve.

Therefore, the LWVIL strongly supports the concepts offered in HB 750 and SB 2288, including:

1. A balance between property tax and State funding, with the State assuming the major responsibility for school funding. The LWVIL opposes a funding system where all moneys would come solely from State funds. (This is in answer to Meeks' latest 'Doomsday' proposal)
2. An increase in income taxes balanced with a family tax credit for the lowest-earning households.
3. An expansion of sales tax to include services.
4. The creation of the School District Property Tax Relief Fund, requiring the General Assembly to appropriate moneys into the Fund to provide grants from the Fund to school districts. It must require that property taxes be abated in school districts by the amount of the grants from the Fund.
5. Improved special education funds for personnel. The LWVIL believes this should include gifted programs.
6. Strong academic and fiscal accountability measures such as those outlined in the School Quality and Accountability Standards.

In short, the League of Women Voters of Illinois supports and urges the General Assembly to enact tax reform legislation during the next Legislative session. We strongly support HB750/SB2288, which provides a comprehensive plan to address the needs of the State for equitable, sustainable, and consistent revenues to fund schools and other important social programs that have been shortchanged for the past several years. The League also supports a progressive income tax, a broad based sales tax and the use of the property tax for only PARTIALLY funding education and local government services.

The current system of taxation fails to meet these criteria and fails to provide adequate revenues for education and other vital state services. These discussions have been going on for far too many years and it is time for our elected legislators to act in the name of good government and on behalf of all people of Illinois – especially the children who will inherit the debts that have been amassed due to the tax structural deficit.