



Don't miss our calendar of "Upcoming Events" on page 2

Area

# VOTEER

Feb 2012

## President's Corner

*Sigi Psimenos*

Dear Leaguers,

Are you feeling like the winter doldrums are still with you? We've got the perfect RX for you - our March programs! Starting with a celebration of **Women's History Month** on March 10th at Randall Oaks Country Club, the **Candidates Forum** at Streamwood High School on the 13th, to the **Future of Mental Health in Kane County** at the Gail Borden Main Library on the 14th, and the **Primary Election** on the 20th.

I'd like to announce another important March event. Please plan on attending our **Consensus Meeting on the Brunner Gravel Mining Study**, scheduled for Wednesday, March 21st. **Carol Grom**, Chair, will be presenting the group's findings and will ask for our input to come to consensus on this issue. If you've never participated in a consensus meeting - now is the time. This will be held right before our regular **Board Meeting** so if you've ever wondered what we discuss at these meetings it'll be a perfect night to do just that. Remember your feedback is important to all of us and your voice matters!

### In this Issue:

President's Corner.....	1
Upcoming Events.....	2
The Future of Mental Health in Kane County.....	3
Referendum Question to be on Elgin Ballot.....	4
Illinois' Budget Crisis, then & now .....	4
National League Privatization Study.....	4
What Happened at the LWVIL Issues Briefing on January 28? .....	5
6th Congressional Candidates' Forum.....	5
Brunner/Gravel Study Consensus Meeting .....	6
Candidates Forum for Kane County Board & Kane County Chair.....	7
Did you know?.....	9
Political Yet Nonpartisan .....	10

Additionally, there are several committees preparing for our **April Annual Meeting**. One of those is the **Nominating Committee**. They are charged with choosing members

*Continued on page 2*

Continued from page 1

to fill the current positions that are up for election on our Board. However, we as a Board have an opportunity to appoint six (6) additional Members to the Board for a one year term I'd like for you to consider serving in this position. Think about it... there's a good chance you'll be getting a call.

See you all next month-

Sigi Psimenos

## Upcoming Events

<b>Date</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Place</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>March 10, 2012</b>	<b>10 am - 12:30 pm</b>	<b>Randall Oaks Country Club</b> on Binnie Road in Dundee	<b>Women's History Month Brunch</b> For 2012, Lynn Rymarz, who you may remember as Nellie Bly, returns to portray American artist Mary Cassatt.
<b>March 13, 2012</b>	<b>6 pm</b>	<b>Streamwood High School</b>	<b>Candidates Forum - Ill Senate 22,23,25,28 &amp; 33</b> focusing on Education -Partnering with U-46 CAC, ETA (Need pages, screeners)
<b>March 14, 2012</b>	<b>6:30 pm -8:30 pm</b>	<b>Gail Borden Public Library</b>	<b>The Future for Mental Health in Kane County</b>
		Jerry Murphy, Executive Director of the INC Board, (formerly Mental Health and Mental Retardation Services, Inc.) will discuss exactly what a "708 board" is, and how they function here in Kane County as well as recent Illinois legislation that will also affect our county. He will also discuss the efforts of the Kane County Mental Health Council to raise awareness of mental health issues locally. Join us and bring your questions. Sponsored by the LWV of the Elgin Area-Mental Health Committee and the Gail Borden Public Library. Questions can be directed to Myra Becker	
<b>March 21, 2012</b>	<b>7 pm</b>	<b>Tyler Towers Clubhouse</b> 1450 Plymouth Ln, Elgin, IL 60123	<b>Consensus Meeting on the Brunner Gravel Mining Study and Board Meeting.</b> Attend this action-oriented meeting to bring our local programs alive. Key community issues are always discussed in a non-partisan manner. The meeting will start with a presentation by Carol Grom of the Brunner Gravel Mining Study Committee on the group's findings. This will be followed by discussion and the opportunity to come to consensus on this issue.
<b>April 10, 2012</b>	<b>7 pm</b>	<b>Gail Borden Public Library</b>	<b>Illinois Tax Policy and Our State Fiscal Crisis</b> More "Illinois' Budget Crisis, then & now" on page 4
<b>April 30, 2012</b>	<b>6 pm</b>	<b>TBD</b>	<b>Annual Meeting</b> As usual, the potluck will kickoff at 6, with the Annual Meeting starting at 7.



## **The Future for Mental Health in Kane County**

**Wednesday, March 14, 2012 @ 6:30 PM**  
**Gail Borden Public Library -Community Rooms**  
**270 North Grove Avenue-Elgin**

Jerry Murphy, Executive Director of the INC Board, (formerly Mental Health and Mental Retardation Services, Inc.) will discuss what the future holds, what a "708 board" is, and how they function here in Kane County as well as recent Illinois legislation that will also affect our county. He will also discuss the efforts of the Kane County Mental Health Council to raise awareness of mental health issues locally. Join us and bring your questions.



Sponsored by the LWV of the Elgin Area Mental  
Health Committee & The Gail Borden Library  
*Additional information*  
[www.lwvelginarea.org](http://www.lwvelginarea.org)  
*Questions 847-742-2411*



# Referendum Question to be on Elgin Ballot

*Elgin Sustainable Master Plan Committee: Sigi Psimenos/Wendy Covich*

At a recent Sustainability Commission meeting, members learned of an initiative that will be on the March 20th ballot. City of Elgin residents are being asked to allow City Officials to pursue an “Opt-Out electric aggregation program”. Electric aggregation is a process which allows governments to pool, or aggregate, the electric usage needs of residents and small businesses. This combining of electric usage opens the opportunity for the community to get competitive bids to seek lower pricing for its residents and small businesses.

For more information, visit the site: <http://cityofelgin.org/DocumentView.aspx?DID=20119>



## Illinois' Budget Crisis, then & now

Learn more on Tuesday, April 10, 7:00 PM at Gail Borden Public Library.

Program: Illinois Tax Policy and Our State Fiscal Crisis

[Dr. Ron Baiman](#) of the [Center for Tax and Budget Accountability](#), a bi-partisan think tank, will explain how ineffective tax policies have contributed to Illinois' current budget crisis and what changes might alleviate education, social services and pension funding issues.

This program is co-sponsored by [AAUW](#), [LWV of the Elgin Area](#) and [Gail Borden Public Library](#) and is open to the public.



## National League Privatization Study

The LWVUS is asking local leagues to participate in a [study on privatization](#) during the winter and spring of 2012. This comes at a good time for the LWVEA because the possibility of privatization has been raised during the current Elgin budget process. Nearby states have engaged in fierce battles over best approaches to providing state and municipal services. Elgin residents would benefit by a League effort to carefully review the proposed goals and potential community impact of transferring government services or functions to the private sector. Materials on the history and regulations related to privatization are available on the LWVUS web site and will be available as LWVEA undertakes this effort. All LWVEA members are encouraged to get involved, and should contact [Myra Becker](#), or any other Board members if you're interested.

# What Happened at the LWVIL Issues Briefing on January 28?

*Sigi Psimenos*

At the **LWVIL Issues Briefing** on Saturday, January 28, the five LWVEA members who attended learned about new voter registration limitations in some parts of our country, food safety issues and agencies for public protection, running LWV candidate forums, and the Illinois smart grid to save energy. We heard background on the LWVUS privatization study and LWVIL pension study.

Diana Kasdanoo of the Brennan Center's Democracy Program, described new laws to limit voter registration opportunities that were introduced in many states and passed in some, during 2011. At least 34 states introduced legislation requiring photo IDs in order to vote, which became law in 8 states despite the fact that many Americans, especially African Americans, senior citizens, and immigrants frequently do not have a photo ID; student IDs became unacceptable as well. Illinois was among states restricting voter registration drives. Requiring proof of citizenship to register or vote, reducing the number of early and absentee voting days and making it difficult for those with past felony convictions to restore their

*Continued on page 7*

## 6th Congressional Candidates' Forum

*Thanks to all who participated in the Forum, for which we partnered with the Palatine LWV, on February 11. Special thanks to Kaye Gamble for sharing these great photos!*



*Fran Cella on the right screened questions from the audience.*

*Wally Grom acted as time keeper*



*Carol Grom (in front) greeted attendees*

*Democratic Candidates from left Geoffrey Petzel, Maureen Yates & Leslie Coolidge*



# Brunner/Gravel Study Consensus Meeting

*Carol Grom*

The Study Committee for the potential for gravel mining in the Kane County Forest Preserve District's Brunner Forest Preserve finished their work and their comprehensive report is available for the membership to read.

The Brunner/Gravel Committee has been working on this for more than 18 months, so be sure to print or download it and read it prior to the meeting. We think you will find it interesting.

Please come prepared to join us for the consensus meeting at 7:00 p.m. on March 21st at the Tyler Towers meeting room.

The entire file can be downloaded by [clicking here](#) or use the links below to download smaller files, section by section:

- [Introduction](#)
- [Study of Potential Gravel Mining of Kane County Forest Preserve's Brunner Property and Background of the Brunner Forest Preserve Gravel Mining Controversy](#)
- [Economic Issues](#)
- [Environmental Issues](#)
- [Social Policy Issues](#)
- [Summary](#)
- [Recommended Actions: Consensus Questions](#)
- [Kane County Forest Preserve District's Long Term IGA's, License Agreements or Leases For Use of Forest Preserve Land](#)
- [Brunner/Gravel Mining Study Group Meeting Minutes](#)
- [Letters](#)
- [Newspaper Articles](#)
- [Bill SB2484 - Proposed Ban on Gravel Mining in Forest Preserves](#)
- [Maps](#)

## ***What is a consensus?***

It is easier to say what consensus is not, than what it is. Consensus is not a vote; rather, consensus is mutual agreement of League members arrived at through discussion. During discussion, everyone has an opportunity to express their viewpoints, and the issue is examined from all sides. Consensus questions, created by the appropriate study committee and approved by the Board, provide structure for the meeting. Members discuss the pros and cons until it becomes apparent that consensus has/has not been reached on each question. The study committee analyzes the consensus responses and, using this information, creates a position statement.

Here is a summary of what a consensus is per the LWVUS (read more at <http://www.lwv.org/content/introduction-study-process>)

*Continued from page 5*

voting rights were among other proposals.

Robert E. Brackett, PhD Director of the Institute of Food Safety and Health, talked about food safety's emergence as a public health and political issue as problems continue to arise from the huge increase in food-borne illness, globalization and the increase in imported foods from countries with other standards, and chemicals used at all levels of food production. State public health safety agencies, the federal Food and Drug Administration and US Department of Agriculture are all working to improve food safety. The new FDA Food Safety Modernization Act tries to be preventive rather than reactive by requiring international inspections, mandatory safety certification for high-risk foods, expanded records access and mandatory recalls when necessary. The obstacle to success is inadequate funding.

Glenview Village Manager, Todd Hileman, described multiple savings he achieved by transferring services to private entities. Rising pension and health care costs, lack of expertise within the staff and the expanding gap between the village's revenues and expenses were the catalysts for exploring the benefits of outsourcing local functions. Savings achieved by transferring services to private

firms included information technology expertise, street sweeping, water system management, high level financial services, a police and social worker program, etc. Celeste Meiffren, the Field Director of the Illinois PIRG (Public Interest Research Group) described Chicago's sale of the Chicago Skyway, four downtown parking garages and 36,000 parking meters for \$1.1 billion with a 75 year contract, as the most egregious example of privatization abuse in the United States. The preparatory work for the sale of the parking meters took place behind closed doors; the lead consultant received a no-bid contract. The City Council was given two days to review and approve the 500-page contract.

Ralph Martire, Director of the Center for Tax and Budget Accountability explained Illinois' "worst fiscal crisis since the Great Depression." Amanda Kass, Pension Specialist, described the unfunded liability of the five Illinois State Pension Systems; the new law that reduces benefits and increases the retirement age to 67 for employees hired after December 31, 2010; and current legislation that attempts to address the State's unfunded pension liability for employees hired before the end of 2010, given opposing legal interpretations of the State Constitution's "protection" of current Illinois public employees' benefits.

## Candidates Forum for Kane County Board & Kane County Chair

*Thanks to all who participated in the Forum on February 25. Special thanks to Kaye Gamble for sharing these great photos!*

*This photo includes those running as Republican for Clerk of the Kane County Circuit Court, from left to right: Carol Grom, moderator; "Tom" Hartwell, Karin M. Herwick and Catherine S. Hurlbut.*

*This photo includes those running as Republican for Kane County Coroner, from left to right: Carol Grom, moderator; Robert (Rob) Russell and Robert Nicholas "Bob" Tiballi*





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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 the 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. Membership costs: \$60 Individual; \$90 Household; \$30 Student.

To join, please send this form and your payment payable to: League of Women Voters of the Elgin Area, c/o Sigi Psimenos, 1450 Plymouth Lane, Elgin, IL 60123

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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## Did you know?

The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan political organization that encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues and influences public policy through education and advocacy. This is the organization's mission statement.

The LWV is organized to parallel the three levels of government: local, state and national. In some areas, local Leagues have formed Inter-League Organizations (ILOs) to address regional concerns. At each level, the League is governed by a volunteer president and board of directors.

Women—and men (since 1974)—who are citizens and at least 18 years old may join the League as voting members. Associate (non-voting) membership is available for younger people and non-citizens. Joining at any level of the organization automatically confers membership at every level, and with that membership comes the opportunity to make an impact on local, state, regional and national public policy issues. (from LWVUS League Basics)

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# Political Yet Nonpartisan

Soon after the League's founding, the decision was made to take positions on issues but to neither support nor oppose any political party or candidate (appointed or elected) for public office. Today, this policy continues to ensure that the League's voice is heard above the tumult of party politics.

To ensure the credibility of the League as a nonpartisan organization, each League's board of directors is responsible for drafting and carrying out its own nonpartisan policy and for seeing that both its members and the public understand the League's nonpartisan role.

Leagues should also have a conflict of interest policy related to board members' paid employment, service on other boards (including League boards at other levels), personal lobbying, etc. (from LWVUS League Basics)

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*The Elgin Area League thanks our 2011 - 2012 Patrons for their support.*



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