



League Links

Newsletter of the League of Women Voters
of the Arlington Heights, Mount Prospect, Buffalo Grove Area
Including Prospect Heights, Wheeling and Elk Grove Village, Illinois

We are online at: <http://www.lwvah.org/>

March 2012

Volume 57, Issue 8

Celebrating 55 years of community service

Our Mission Statement/Purpose: The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.



ACTIVITY CALENDAR



Date	Time	Event
March 2012		National Women's History Month: Women's Education--Women's Empowerment
March 11-17, 2012		Sunshine Week: Your right to know
Wednesday, March 7	1:30 - 3:30 PM	Chat on privatization study at Susan Fuller's, 414 E. Rockwell, Arlington Heights, 60005
Tuesday, March 13		Last day of grace period registration and voting
Thursday, March 15		Last day of Early Voting
Thursday, March 15	7 PM doors open; 7:30 PM program	Celeste Meiffren, Field Director of IL PIRG, speaks on Privatization: "Government and the Yellow Pages Argument". Arlington Heights Historical Society, 110 W. Fremont, Arlington Heights, 60004.
Friday, March 16		In-person absentee voting begins at Clerk's downtown Chicago office, suburban courthouse, and mini-centers
Tuesday, March 20	6 AM – 7 PM	Primary Election Day. Referenda on ballot.
Tuesday, March 20	7 PM	Chat on privatization study at Rena Trevor's, 3905 Redwing Court, Rolling Meadows 60008
Wednesday, March 21	2:30 PM	Board meeting at Nancy Duel's, 115 N. Windsor, Arlington Heights, 60004 Members invited
Tuesday, March 27	7 PM	Strategy Meeting on proposed housing in Arlington Heights for those with mental illness. St. John United Church of Christ, 308 N. Evergreen Ave., Arlington Heights, 60004.
Thursday, April 19	7 PM doors open	Privatization Study Consensus Meeting. Arlington Heights Historical Society, 110 W. Fremont, Arlington Heights, 60004.
June 8-12		LWVUS Convention in Washington, D.C. "Power the Vote: Imagine, Commit, Act!"



A MESSAGE FROM LWVUS President
POWER THE VOTE
Successful Petition to White House re FEC
LWVUS v Citizens United

Last week, the League and its partners demonstrated, once again, that the grassroots can speak up to power! More than 25,000 activists answered our call and signed onto our petition urging the President to begin fixing what ails the Federal Elections Commission. The ball is now in President Obama's court, to restore the FEC to its watchdog role. The League is eagerly awaiting the response to our petition from President Obama and to hear about his plans for the government agency charged with enforcing the law and stopping illegal coordination by candidate Super PACs.

Just Where is the LWVUS in the Fight Against Citizens United?

In January, the LWVUS Board discussed possible approaches and approved the creation of a Campaign Finance Reform Task Force, as well as making this issue a legislative priority.

In related action, the Board determined that the League is not in a position, at this time, to support a Constitutional amendment in this area because too many questions about this approach remained unanswered. The Supreme Court in *Citizens United* used several well-established legal concepts to create an elections funding formula that leaves a legal tangle among "independent" expenditures, so-called corporate free speech, freedom of the press and the meaning of "person" under the Constitution. So Constitutional solutions will have implications beyond campaign finance.

The League and its partners were invited to a meeting with Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi and several other Representatives at the Capitol. The focus was not just on the DISCLOSE Act but also on longer-term solutions to the devastation created by *Citizens United*, including an unspecified Constitutional amendment. We went around the room giving our various approaches to campaign finance reform; each group, including the League, supported DISCLOSE. On behalf of the League, I was the only one raising any questions about the potential for unintended consequences in the current proposals for an amendment. The response to these concerns can only be described as the same as if we had said the emperor has no clothes. Many in the room quickly began to qualify their support.

Leaguers should take great confidence from this that the League's voice matters as does our thoughtful approach to complex issues.

Elisabeth MacNamara, President



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March 15 Program: Privatization "Government and The Yellow Pages Argument"



Cutting Through the "Deals" to Insure the Public Interest

Featured Speaker: Celeste Meiffren, Illinois PIRG

The Yellow Pages Argument: if a service can be found in the Yellow Pages, government should NOT be doing it. This is part of the movement to pass legislation mandating that all government services be classified as either "inherently governmental" or "commercial".

For several weeks now, members have been focusing on our national study of Privatization, the selling or leasing of government services or assets. This practice has gained momentum as government revenues have shrunk and officials search for ways to reduce costs and balance budgets. The debate over privatization has been heated as stories of "deals" gone bad circulate in the news media.

**What is the real scoop on privatization?
Is the Yellow Pages Argument right?
Is it a cost-efficient way to provide government services?
Or can it be a series of "sweetheart deals" masquerading as good government?**

Celeste Meiffren is Field Director of Illinois PIRG [a coalition of Public Interest Research Groups]. Ms Meiffren excited Leaguers when she spoke at the Privatization Workshop of the LWVIL Issues Briefing last month. Using examples, she will explain how oversight, transparency, and accountability – or the lack thereof – make all the difference in whether the public wins or loses in a privatization transaction.

The privatization issue can be confusing, but understanding it is critical!
Join the discussion Thursday evening, March 15, at the Historical Society.

Results from our February Program Planning

League members discussed various options for future League focus and action and reached the following results:

Recommendations to LWVUS

Review of the existing Fiscal Policy Position

Scope: The review would gather those principles, from various League positions, that would indicate which reforms of the tax system are needed to insure the fairness of the system and individual and corporate responsibility for and accountability to the common good.

Recommending Concurrence

Concurrence with the League of Women Voters of Pennsylvania's position on "Natural Gas Extraction from the Marcellus Shale"

Scope: This concurrence would bring together and make more effective all the issues under our Natural Resources Position, particularly air and water quality, as they are affected by the practice of Fracking. This concurrence position could then be used as the logical extension of and next step in our support of the EPA's regulatory powers and could build on the contacts and efforts made during our successful Clean Air Promise campaign.

The members also asked that there be **increased focus and action on:** Natural Resources, Environmental Protection, and Pollution Control (especially to eliminate the exemption of oil and gas industries from environmental laws); Individual Liberties (e.g. reform of P.A.T.R.I.O.T. Act); and Public Policy on Reproductive Choice.

Members asked that there be **continued focus and action on** Citizens Right to Vote and Campaign Finance Reform.

Cathy Duoba, Program Chair

UPDATE ON MEMBERSHIP

By Pat Lindner

Please welcome our two new members:

Mary Mason, new resident of the Moorings and previously active in LWV in Holland Michigan.

Patricia (Pat) Lind, a retired teacher and friend of Karen Hribar.

A reminder that two of our long-time Leaguers, **Rena Trevor and Mary Schlott Repenning**, are wheelchair-bound and would enjoy having visitors (please call first) or "visiting" by phone.



Privatization Chats Schedule

If you haven't joined in these free-wheeling, often-heated discussions of the various aspects of the Privatization issue, there are still two chats left.

What are you waiting for? Why should others be having all the FUN?

Wednesday afternoon, March 7, 1:30 pm at Sue Fuller's:

Topic: "**Surveying State Laws Addressing Privatization**" and your pick of several case studies

Tuesday evening, March 20, 7:00 pm at Rena Trevor's:

Topic: the papers on **Strategies** and on **Transparency/Accountability**

Study papers are available at www.lwv.org/member-resources/privatization

FINANCE REPORT

By Pat Lindner

Seven of our advertisers have renewed their ads:

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What to Expect at the National Convention!

Washington, DC, in June. . . What could be lovelier!

Sharing fellow Leaguers' smarts, energy, and successes

Starting with a great pre-Convention workshop, "Power Our Voice To Power the Vote," on Friday, June 8, and concluding with the final plenary at noon on Tuesday, June 12, attending the national convention is the best cure for sagging spirits. Just ask anyone who has attended one! And this year it is in our nation's capitol...talk about the chances to see some action!



When you visit DC for the national Convention, you could take a few extra days to wander around the District. The League's special hotel rate (which you can book online) will last from June 5-15, so you can really have the complete DC experience! To get a glimpse of what you can expect at the

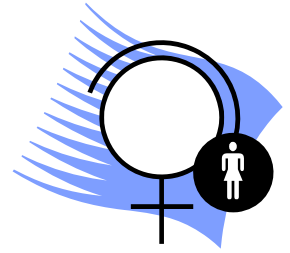
LWVUS Convention "Power the Vote: Imagine, Commit, Act!"

Go to www.lwv.org/member-resources/general-convention-information.

Statement of Position on Public Policy on Reproductive Choices

As announced by National Board, January, 1983.

In view of the many recent events involving the right of women to make reproductive choices, a review of the LWVUS position on this issue is very timely. The position and a history of the many League actions taken on the issue over the years can be found in "Impact on Issues", page 23 to 25, at www.lwv.org/content/impact-issues.



“The League of Women Voters of the United States believes that public policy in a pluralistic society must affirm the constitutional right of privacy of the individual to make reproductive choices.”



HOUSING STRATEGY MEETING MARCH 27

By Judith Royal

Many Arlington Heights residents are upset that in May 2010 the Arlington Heights Village Board voted against the proposed housing at Boeger Drive for persons with mental illness. They don't want to wait, perhaps as much as a decade, while the lawsuit *Daveri Development v Village of Arlington Heights* makes its way through the courts. They don't want those potential residents who need this housing to wait. They especially do not want more and more of their tax money to be wasted in a suit it seems likely the Village will lose.

Daveri and The Task Force, which proposed the housing, have always wanted to work with the Mayor and Trustees so the housing could be built, but the Village Board seemed unresponsive after the May 2010 vote. [The Task Force is short for North/Northwest Suburban Task Force on Supportive Housing for Individuals with Mental Illness.]

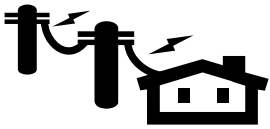
Concerned residents will meet at 7 PM on Tuesday, March 27, at St. John United Church of Christ, 308 N. Evergreen Ave., Arlington Hts. IL 60004. Please come to this meeting with a friend and help strategize how citizens can urge the Village to settle out of court and build this housing, which is so desperately needed. Within a 10-mile radius of the Boeger site, there is need of 900 apartments for persons dealing with mental illness. When the need is so great, it seems strange that the Village would spend taxpayer money on legal fees and delay this project.

When the Village rejected the Boeger development, the Task Force approached attorneys at the John Marshall Law School. These attorneys were so convinced by recent court decisions that this rejection was a violation of fair housing laws that they agreed to take the case *pro bono*. A lawsuit—*Daveri Development v Village of Arlington Heights*--was filed in federal court late last year.

In 2010, NAMI Illinois gave our League the 2010 Friend of NAMI award for our League members' efforts in support of this development. Let us show our belief in the need for this housing is just as strong in 2012 as it was when we began two years ago. **Please come to the strategy meeting with a friend on Tuesday, March 27.**

The League of Women Voters gratefully acknowledges the generosity of the Horner Group in providing all the printing, postage and mailing services for our bulletins.





BINDING REFERENDUM QUESTION ON BALLOT

By Judith Royal

You don't want to be caught off guard when you vote on March 20 in the Primary Election. The ballot will include a referendum question asking voters if the Village should have the authority to seek competitive pricing bids for electric services under a single contract. For the referendum to pass a majority of the voters on March 20 will have to vote yes.

Because the state of Illinois deregulated suppliers of electricity, now there are over 20 suppliers trying to get your business. (Maybe you have had a few telephone solicitations.) No matter who supplies your power, Com Ed will continue to deliver it and issue your billing statement. If the referendum passes, you would have several choices: Join the aggregate or opt out by choosing to stay with Com Ed or your current supplier, or by shopping your own supplier.

The Village of Arlington Heights, Buffalo Grove, Lincolnshire, Long Grove, Palatine, Vernon Hills, and Wheeling are collaborating on this electricity initiative to serve residents and small businesses. Collectively, the communities will seek one wholesale electric supplier to obtain competitive prices. By aggregating power, it is believed that each municipality will be able to obtain the best supply rate for residents and small business. Big corporations, school districts, and hospitals have bought energy through competitive bids for years.

For more information visit: www.palatine.il.us/residents/electricity_aggregation

Early Voting Locations

By Judith Royal

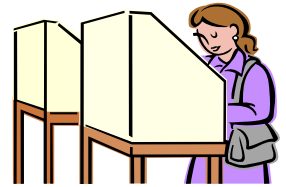
You can **vote early** until Thursday, March 15 at the following suburban locations:

Arlington Heights Village Hall: Monday to Saturday 9 AM to 5 PM; Sunday 9 AM to 3 PM

Elk Grove Village Hall: Monday to Saturday 9 AM to 5 PM

Rolling Meadows Courthouse: Monday to Friday 9 AM to 5 PM

Palatine Village Hall: Monday to Saturday 9 AM to 5 PM



For additional locations and information about suburban elections, go to www.cookcountyclerk.com/elections/.

Remember state law requires early voters to display valid photo identification to an election official before receiving a ballot to vote early. Valid forms of ID include: a current driver's license, state-issued ID card, university/college ID or another government-issued ID with a photograph.



SUNSHINE WEEK, MARCH 11-17, 2012



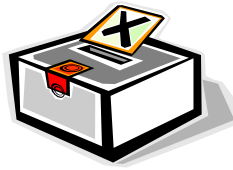
By Judith Royal

Sunshine Week is a national initiative to educate the public about the importance of open government and the dangers of excessive and unnecessary secrecy. It was established in March 2005. Sunshine Week occurs each year in mid-March, coinciding with James Madison's birthday and National Freedom of Information Day on March 16.

The Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), enacted in 1966, formally established a presumption that records held by the government (with some specific exemptions) are accessible to the people. However, additional polling data indicates that most Americans continue to view our government as secretive.

Sunshine Week could be a good, short-term winter project for a League member. She could find ways to urge citizens and civic organizations to press state and local officials to find meaningful ways to participate in Sunshine Week and demonstrate they are committed to true transparency in government.

Educate yourself about the Attack on the Voting Rights Act and Efforts to Block the Vote



Voting Rights Act Under Assault

As noted in our last bulletin, the League anticipates challenges to the Voting Rights Act before the November elections. An article from [Politico](#) gave a good overview of the challenges we face. Read the article at www.politico.com/news/stories/0212/73058.html.

The Link Behind the Wave of Voter Suppression Laws

The New York Times ran an informative editorial last month that links the influence of big money on the wave of voter suppression laws sweeping the country, specifically connecting these efforts with the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC) and its billionaire backers. Read the editorial at www.nytimes.com/2012/02/13/opinion/the-big-money-behind-state-laws.html?_r=3&hp

LWVIL Redistricting Lawsuit

The Redistricting lawsuit has moved forward. As announced at the Issues Briefing, a direct appeal and brief was filed with the Supreme Court on January 27. We are hopeful that the court will hear our direct appeal. Updates appear on the front page of the website, at www.lwvil.org

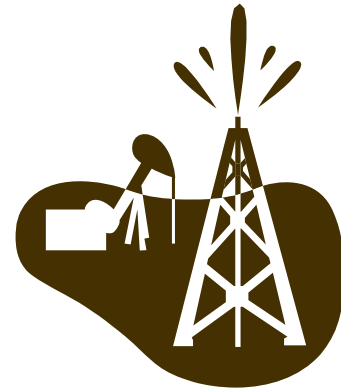
OPPOSED TO KEYSTONE OVER ENVIRONMENT??

HOW ABOUT TAX BREAKS TO EXPORT THE OIL??

LWVUS OPPOSES KEYSTONE LEGISLATION

The following are key excerpts from the letter to Congress sent by LWVUS and coalition partners:

...The Keystone XL pipeline would transport toxic tar sands from under Canada's Boreal forest 1,700 miles to the Gulf of Mexico to be refined and exported...Pending legislation would effectively **turn Congress into a permitting authority, bypassing a robust environmental and safety review** and approving a project for which a route has not even yet been determined. These efforts must be rejected. Congress should not be in the business of short-circuiting environmental and safety reviews to permit the individual pet projects of big oil.



The environmental and safety dangers from the pipeline are clear...

Moreover, the pipeline would do little for our energy security. Its main purpose is to make this oil available for export. Keystone XL would divert Canadian oil from refineries in the Midwest to the Gulf Coast. These refineries are in Foreign Trade Zones where oil may be exported to international buyers without paying U.S. taxes.

By redirecting oil that is currently being shipped to the Midwest, Keystone XL would also serve to increase the price of fuel in the Midwest by \$4-6 billion dollars in the first year of operation alone...[farmers] voice their opposition to this dangerous and costly project.

Finally, the pipeline itself poses grave dangers to America's vital water resources. Tar sands oil is more acidic and corrosive than conventional oil and transported under higher pressure, posing a far greater risk of leaks along the pipeline route...

The facts reveal this pipeline was **never in America's national interest...**

PRIVATIZATION CONSENSUS QUESTIONS

These are the questions we will use
to reach consensus on Privatization
at our regular monthly meeting, April 19



Members who have participated in the study
are urged to “Save the Date”

It’s still not too late to attend the chats. If you miss some discussions, the study papers at www.lwv.org/member-resources/privatization are loaded with information on various aspects of this study.

1. As a general matter, the extent to which government functions, services and assets have been privatized in the past decade is:

Much too much Too much About right Too little Much too little No consensus

2. Core government services and functions important to well-being of the people should remain with government and not be transferred to the private sector.

Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree No consensus

3. As a matter of good government policy, which of the following criteria should be applied when making decisions to transfer government services, assets and functions to the private sector?

a. Transparency and Accountability: All government contracts with private companies for services must ensure public access to relevant records and information regarding contracted services, functions and assets and provide for adequate government oversight and control.

High priority Lower priority Not a priority No consensus

b. Public Well-being: Provisions are in place to assure that, in the event any public services are to be privatized, there will be no increased risks to public well-being, especially to vulnerable populations.

High priority Lower priority Not a priority No consensus

c. Cost and Quality: Privatized services should not appreciably increase the costs or decrease the quality of services to the public.

High priority Lower priority Not a priority No consensus

d. Environmental and Natural Resources: Defined parameters should be in place to assure that environmental and natural resources are not compromised.

High priority Lower priority Not a priority No consensus

e. Contracts and Sales of Public Assets: All government contracts and privatized public assets should be subject to competitive bidding and comply with all laws regarding awarding contracts.

High priority Lower priority Not a priority No consensus

f. Economic Impact: Privatization should not result in a negative economic impact on the communities in which the services are provided.

High priority Lower priority Not a priority No consensus

g. Government Recovery of Services and Assets: Provisions should be in place to recover key services, assets and functions should the private sector fail to safeguard them.

High priority Lower priority Not a priority No consensus

4. Privatization is not appropriate:

a. When the government lacks the will, ability or resources to adequately oversee contracts with the private entity and any successor thereto.

Agree Disagree No Consensus

b. When there is no private entity able or willing to provide the service for the short and long term.

Agree Disagree No Consensus

c. When it poses a potential threat to national security.

Agree Disagree No Consensus

d. When it poses a risk to personal or security data.

Agree Disagree No Consensus

e. When there has been evidence of potential corruption.

Agree Disagree No Consensus

f. When the private entity's goals and purposes are not compatible with public well-being.

Agree Disagree No Consensus

g. When the private entity has not complied with existing government requirements for public records, open meetings or publication of reports and audits.

Agree Disagree No Consensus

h. When a loss of revenue decreases government support for mandated or critical services.

Agree Disagree No Consensus

5. Some states have developed laws and regulations to control the process of privatization within their jurisdictions.

As a general matter, should privatization be regulated?

a. Yes, all privatization efforts should be regulated.

b. Yes, some types of privatization efforts should be regulated.

c. No, privatization efforts should never be regulated

d. No consensus

6. Which of the following should be included in the regulatory process when privatizing public assets, services and functions?

a. Timely public announcements regarding intentions to privatize and the clear and measurable expected benefits to the public.

Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree No consensus

b. Public and stakeholder (investors, shareholders, experts) input into the decision and terms of the contract.

Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree No consensus

c. Feasibility study regarding performance, costs and benefits.

Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree No consensus

d. Adherence to all laws regarding public contracts.

Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree No consensus

e. Transition plans for displaced employees.

Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree No consensus

f. Accountability and transparency provisions in all contracts.

Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree No consensus

g. Regular performance evaluations including meaningful opportunity for public comment.

Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree No consensus

h. Provisions for transferring services and assets back to the government or another contractor in the event of inadequate performance.

Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree No consensus

i. Adequate resources for enforcement.

Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree No consensus



NEWS FROM LWVUS

See also articles [LWVUS Convention](#), [Privatization Study](#), [Citizens United](#), and [Reproductive Choice](#)

ELECTIONS: Voter Suppression

Voting Rights Act under Attack

A challenge to Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act has been on the radar of voting rights groups across the country as numerous new voter suppression laws are being implemented. Section 5 requires all or parts of 16 states (called "covered jurisdictions") to "pre-clear" proposed changes in voting or election procedures with either the U.S. Department of Justice or the U.S. District Court in the District of Columbia. The U.S. District Court in DC heard arguments to overturn Section 5. **We anticipate that this argument could be heard by the US Supreme Court before the November elections and could jeopardize a key provision that has been used to protect millions of voters.**

LWVSC President Barbara Zia Discussed Voter Suppression on PBS

LWVSC President Barbara Zia was featured on PBS's Religion and Ethics program discussing the impact of the new photo ID law being implemented in the state. The assault on voting rights continues in **South Carolina** with proof of citizenship requirements and new restrictions on voter registration drive legislation making their way through the legislature.

Finally Some Good News! Photo ID Bill dies in Maine

Democrats and Republicans joined together in **Maine** last week to defeat legislative language that would have required photo ID at the polls. In the second year of this unprecedented assault on voting rights, it is good news to see a win for democracy.

Redistricting: LWVUS and State Leagues Speak Out

The LWVUS and the **Texas** League spoke out following last month's Supreme Court ruling regarding the state's controversial redistricting plans (disappointed with blockage of federal court maps and encouraged that original, discriminatory maps will not be implemented). Meanwhile, the **Pennsylvania** League and a group of citizen plaintiffs are celebrating a historic victory as the state Supreme Court has struck down the state's overtly partisan redistricting plans. The **California** League joined other groups in submitting comprehensive recommendations for improving upon the state's Independent Citizens Commission.

ADVOCACY

League Opposes S.J. Res. 37

The League and Coalition partners sent a letter urging the Senate to oppose S.J. Res.37, the Congressional Review Act disapproval resolution sponsored by Senator Inhofe that would eliminate the **Environmental Protection Agency's** (EPA) life-saving Mercury and Air Toxics Standards for power plants. This resolution puts the health of our children and families at risk and threatens the quality of our air and water.

League Supports DISCLOSE 2012 in Congress

The LWVUS Lobby Corps is asking Representatives to cosponsor H.R. 4010, **DISCLOSE 2012**, introduced by Rep. Chris Van Hollen. The legislation provides essential new disclosure requirements to cover the hundreds of millions of dollars in secret contributions being injected into federal elections by non-profit groups and other entities. The legislation also ensures that there will be timely disclosure by Super PACs. The League and coalition partners also sent a letter supporting H.R. 4010.

League Opposes Keystone XL Pipeline Legislation

The League joined groups from the environmental community in opposing legislation to approve the **Keystone XL Pipeline**. The letter said pending legislation would effectively turn Congress into a permitting authority, bypassing a robust environmental and safety review and approving a project for which a route has not even been determined, and called for the rejection of such actions. Read the entire letter at www.lwv.org/content/league-joins-coalition-partners-opposition-keystone-xl-pipeline.



- Michael B. Schroeder, D.D.S.
- Kenneth A. Johnson, D.D.S.
- Renee P. Pappas, D.D.S.
- Robert P. DiChristofano, D.D.S.
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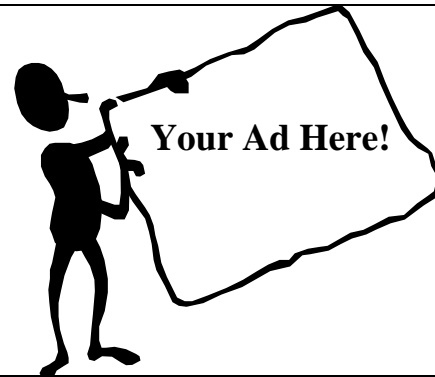
YOU KNOW THE COST BEFORE WE START

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See you Thursday, March 15!

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