

## LWVUS CONVENTION, JUNE 9-13, 2006

The theme of the convention was “Meeting in the Middle” emphasizing the location, Minneapolis, and the convention color, purple, emphasizing the mix of red and blue states. The St. Paul Pioneer Press welcomed delegates with the headline “Welcome Wonder Women.” There were approximately 1,000 people in attendance, not all of them voting delegates, however. Outgoing President Kay Maxwell used a gavel that belonged to Susan B. Anthony for the opening plenary session, which had to be returned immediately after.

The five plenary sessions had guest speaker Dr. Thomas Mann, senior fellow at the Brookings Institute, for the first session, and a judicial panel at another. Other plenary sessions included order of business items, reports of various committees, presentation of the proposed 2006-2008 program, a treasurer’s report, presentation of the proposed budget and by-laws, roll call of the states, and a recognition of new leagues. Votes were taken to adopt the paper ballot record (SARA), abolition of the death penalty, checks and balances and separation of powers, internet equality, and a three-year study on immigration. At the last plenary session an increase in the per member payment was adopted, which prompted the Alaska delegate to state that her league could no longer continue. Directives to the new board included clean air, a fund for “folding” leagues, against the Iraq war, disarmament, and that incoming national members be considered members of a local league and fees be appropriate to that status.

There were workshops and caucuses that kept every delegate busy from early morning until late at night. They included, among many others, abolishing the Electoral College, global warming, health care reform, the UN and a 12 month pilot study at five sites to target for membership newly-retired professional women between the ages of 50 and 65. The speaker at the banquet on our last night was Garrison Keillor who praised the League and talked about differences in ways we live using many illustrations comparing the lives of his older son and younger daughter, all with his usual brand of homespun humor.

My overall impression is that the League is a highly-organized extremely professional, dedicated group of very intelligent women (and some men) who know what they’re doing, what they need to do, and how to do it. Although sometimes tiring and sometimes tedious, too, I learned a great deal, met many wonderful and interesting people, and came away feeling fortunate to have been able to have this impressive, exhilarating experience.