

2018-2019 Year in Review

By Laurie Rose, President, LWV-LF/LB

After nearly 100 years of education and advocacy, LWV-LF/LB remains active and engaged. In a year in which women dominated much of the discussion on the national stage, the voices of our local members truly made a difference.

SUMMER 2018

Our year began not with a whimper but with a bang—the explosion of fireworks following our appearance in the annual Lake Bluff Fourth of July parade. This year, we created a noisy and novel dog-themed voting appeal that captured the attention of the parade judges; the LWV-LF/LB entry won Second Prize. Kudos to Veteran Parade Chair CAROL RUSS (and her pooch Cowboy) and League members PRUE BIEDLER, BETH BERG, WYN CAIN (and her grand-dog), LYNN GAFFIGAN, ANN GRANT, CINDY MOREHEAD, SUSAN RIDER, LAURIE ROSE, NICKI SNOBLIN, and MARILYN TURCHI, who braved the sultry summer heat to make this happen.

We followed up on this win with a similarly spirited march in Lake Forest at the annual Lake Forest Day parade. League members WYN CAIN, ROBIN HUSZAGH, CAROL RUSS, UNCLE SAM, MARILYN TURCHI, and JANICE WOLTER distributed cards with a QR code and link to the Illinois Voter Guide, which provided online information on every state and local race. Thanks to AMY KNUTSON STRACK, MARILYN TURCHI, and NICKI SNOBLIN for creating the cards—which were imitated by other local Leagues.

AMY KNUTSON STRACK also worked to compose the stunning graphics for the posters, flyers, invitations and social media that accompany most of our events throughout the year.

FALL 2018

In September, for our Fall Kickoff Event, we enjoyed tea and treats at the Knollwood Club as Ngozi Okorofo, former chief operating officer and senior policy advisor of the Illinois Department of Central Management Services, regaled the crowd with her stories about what it was like to be “in the room where it happens” when Illinois passed the ERA. In her engaging speech, “The Long Road: Musings on the Passage of the ERA and Women in Illinois Politics,” Okorofo discussed bias

and money in politics, the #MeToo movement, and her mixed feelings about the road to the passage of the 19th Amendment. Intrepid Hospitality Chairs ANN GRANT and MARILYN TURCHI worked with Membership Vice President BETH BERG to fill the room at the Knollwood Club to a standing-room-only capacity and provide unanticipated guests with extra chairs. Thanks to the following individuals and institutions for the raffle donations: Deer Path Inn, Del Rio Restaurant, Fresh Market (Lake Forest), Sunset Foods (Lake Forest), Meg Barnhart (Zen of Slow Cooking), and LAURIE ROSE. Special thanks to League member PAULINE MOHR for helping us secure the beautiful venue for this event.

September marked the debut of Drinks & Discussion, a casual monthly event featuring a short speech on a hot topic accompanied by drinks (both alcoholic and non-alcoholic) and tasty treats at the North Shore Distillery. Thanks to NICKI SNOBLIN, Vice President of Program/Advocacy and Action, for implementing this popular monthly event at the suggestion of Past President WYN CAIN.

Also in September, we were treated to the ruminations of Alberto Coll, a Cuban-born law professor who hosted an energetic crowd at Dickinson Hall for a presentation on “Cuba at the Crossroads.” This event, co-sponsored by Great Decisions and Dickinson Hall, was made possible through the generous efforts of HAPPIE DATT, JANE PARTRIDGE, ANN GRANT, CINDY MOREHEAD, and several anonymous event sponsors.

In October, League members joined LWVIL as part of a “March to the Polls” cohort for the Women’s March in Chicago. AMY KNUTSON STRACK, WYN CAIN, ANN GRANT, and CINDY MOREHEAD led the charge in this effort.

To save trees as well as to align with the practice of all the other North Shore Leagues, we transformed our paper League Lines newsletter into an online newsletter this year. AMY KNUTSON STRACK, NICKI SNOBLIN, ANN HAMLIN, and LAURIE ROSE worked with many members to create a timely product that incorporates colorful photos and bits of trivia as well as news. LFHS students KELSEY MARX and PAULINE DROEGE wrote pieces that provided us with diverse perspectives on

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voting and gun violence. Our next issue will feature a piece from Elizabeth Andersen, one of our college-student members.

MARY MATHEWS, Vice President of Voter Service, coordinated voter registration at multiple area locations on National Voter Registration Day and Election Day. Student liaison KELSEY MARX spearheaded our Voter Registration efforts at Lake Forest High School; our League also partnered with 11 other organizations throughout our voting area to register voters. We registered many new voters, answered innumerable questions, and handed out hundreds of our new Illinois Voter Guide cards. With the popularity of online registration, we serve as both informational resource and registrar for voters of all ages. BEV ADAMCZYK, KATIE ANDERSEN, KITTY COLE, HAPPIE DATT, TERRY DESMOND, CAROL GAYLE, ANN GRANT, LINDA HINDE, DIANE LLOYD, MARY ELLEN MCGOEY, PAULINE MOHR, DAVID MUELLER, JOY GUSCOTT-MUELLER, LOIS NICOL, ELLORY PECK, JULIA SHACKLEFORD, and MONICA YAUN assisted with voter registration and poll watching. TERRY DESMOND spearheaded an effort to increase the number of Election Judges in Lake County.

The opening of the new History Center of Lake Forest-Lake Bluff marked another first for the League. In early October, ANN GRANT and LAURIE ROSE presented a tandem reading of the 99-year history of the Leagues of Women Voters of Lake Bluff and Lake Forest for League and History Center members. We hope to partner with the History Center for additional Centennial events next year.

Throughout the year, League members led Great Decisions, a world affairs group in which readings from briefing books and a companion video are accompanied by discussions of foreign policy. These groups, which include non-League members, are spearheaded by League members ELEANOR McMURRIN (Lake Forest Place Great Decisions Group) and HAPPIE DATT (Lake Forest Library Great Decisions Group). Happie started the evening group this year and enhanced our relationship with the Lake Forest Library.

Fall Candidate Debates for the 10th Congressional District, 29th State Senate District, 58th State Representative District, Lake County sheriff, Lake County clerk, Lake County treasurer, 11th District Lake Coun-

ty Board, and 21st District Lake County Board races attracted record crowds. MARY MATHEWS, Vice President of Voter Service, and her team coordinated with the Deerfield, Highland Park/Highwood, and Glenview/Glencoe Leagues and the Union League Club of Chicago to co-sponsor these debates.

LWV-LF/LB is grateful to the following volunteers who assisted with candidate debates throughout the year: LINDA BARTMES, WYN CAIN, HAPPIE DATT, TERRY DESMOND, PEG DETERMAN, LYNETTE FOSS, CAROL GAYLE, ANN GRANT, ANN HAMLIN, CHICK HAYMAN, MARY DALE HOUSTON, ROBIN HUSZAGH, JACKIE JOHNSON, LINDA HINDE, KELSEY MARX, MARY ELLEN MCGOEY, CHRISTINE MOSES, LOIS NICOL, MARIA PASQUESI, CAROL RUSS, LAURIE ROSE, AMY KNUTSON STRACK, NICKI SNOBLIN, KARYN SZAFLARSKI, MARILYN TURCHI, and EMILY WATTS. Videos of all LWV-LF/LB candidate debates remain online at www.LWV-LFLB.org. Our website, and its constantly updated calendar, is maintained throughout the year by NICKI SNOBLIN. As our Fundraising Chair, TOM MESKEL worked to provide us with corporate sponsors.

In November, we pioneered a program format that was widely imitated by other local Leagues. Our "Gun Violence: Local Impact" event included a psychologist, a member of law enforcement, an educator, and a gun violence prevention activist. Members of the Program/Advocacy & Action Committee, including NICKI SNOBLIN, KATIE ANDERSEN, ANNE SORENSEN, CAROL KAY, JOANN DESMOND, MARY MATHEWS, WYN CAIN, and LAURIE ROSE researched the event topic thoroughly and created a program format that resonated throughout our state.

As some Illinois school districts sought to implement policy and legislation that would have permitted the arming of school personnel, President LAURIE ROSE addressed Lake Forest School District 67 and Lake Forest Community High School District 115 Boards of Education regarding the LWVIL and LWV-LF/LB opposition to arming school personnel. Our voice echoed throughout the community as the policy was defeated and both school boards incorporated Laurie's comments into their widely distributed community newsletters and video recordings.

Our Holiday Luncheon at MLG in Lake Forest featured

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actress Annette Baldwin, who donned costumes and discussed the long history of female suffrage in her creative program, "From Parlor to Politics: The Struggle for the Woman's Right to Vote." As members reconnected with one another in the holiday spirit and assisted with fundraising by shopping for centerpieces and scarves, President LAURIE ROSE awarded the Carrie Chapman Catt Award to ALICE SIEVERT, who humbly spoke about her studies regarding the environment and other League efforts. DIANE LLOYD followed Laurie's tribute with many warm and wonderful personal recollections of her time with Alice, and ANN GRANT recognized Alice's 50 years of League membership through the presentation of a Legacy Member certificate. Kudos to Hospitality Chairs ANN GRANT and MARILYN TURCHI for finding a terrific new venue entertainment for this popular event and to Vice President of Membership BETH BERG for creating the novel spreadsheets that facilitate tracking our members and their interests with enhanced precision.

WINTER 2019

A series of winter storms didn't deter our members from seeking a warm and hospitable welcome from KATIE ANDERSEN as she invited new and existing members to her home for our New Member Coffee, which featured tasty treats and an introduction to all things LWV-LF/LB. Although several of our former Northwest Lake County members left our League to create a new MAL League this year, our membership continues to grow each and every month! Please take time to welcome new members and introduce them to your portfolios and activities.

On February 14, the League's birthday (happy birthday to us!), we gathered at the home of DIANE LLOYD for "Grassroots and Goodies," our annual local Program planning event. In keeping with tradition, we discussed and debated possible topics for our 2019-2020 program amidst appealing art and copious refreshments.

The Climate Change Interest Group, chaired by Joy GUSCOTT-MUELLER, continued to meet monthly at Starbucks over beverages and treats this year. DAVID MUELLER, LWVIL Lake Michigan Region Chapter Liaison, kept the group informed about the Foxconn litigation and the petition to fight the diversion of water from the Lake Michigan Watershed caused by the Foxconn

development. The group also shared news about climate change and participated in a new book discussion component.

In a year in which the definitions of democracy were under frequent discussion, in March our League returned to the themes of "Making Democracy Work" with "Safeguarding Democracy: A Panel Discussion on Voting Rights, Money in Politics and Redistricting Reform." KATIE ANDERSEN, ANNE SORENSEN, CAROL KAY, JOANN DESMOND, MARY MATHEWS, WYN CAIN, and LAURIE ROSE worked with Vice President of Program/Advocacy & Action NICKI SNOBLIN to create an informative event co-sponsored by the Adlai Stevenson Center on Democracy. Nancy Stevenson of the Stevenson Center provided an introduction at the event and graciously thanked the League for its advocacy work.

Legislative interviews provide our League members with the opportunity to meet with our elected representatives in small groups. This year, we partnered with the LWV in Deerfield and Highland Park/Highwood to interview State Representative Bob Morgan and State Senator Julie Morrison. Our legislative interview participants included KATIE ANDERSEN, LINDA BARTMES, TRACY BAADE, TERRY DESMOND, CAROL GAYLE, and EMILY WATTS.

When the Lake Forest Housing Trust Board contemplated the creation of additional senior and inclusionary housing in our area, President LAURIE ROSE contacted the Housing Trust Board and officials in Lake Forest and Lake Bluff to reiterate our longstanding support for senior housing. Treasurer STEVE POTSIC and Board Members JANE PARTRIDGE and CAROL GAYLE assisted the Board in this effort with their extensive knowledge of the history of senior housing initiatives in our area.

SPRING 2019

As spring approached, several of the Board members enjoyed a lunch with LWVIL Executive Director Audra Wilson at MLG in Lake Forest. Her open and engaging demeanor and interesting background prompted us to invite her back to Lake Forest—as our 2019 Fall Kickoff speaker! Be sure to look for an announcement of this event later this summer.

We hosted two local debates in March: for the Third Ward Alderman in Lake Forest and the Rockland Fire

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Protection District Board. Both of these events were “standing room only,” and videos of the events have received many views on Facebook and our website.

Prior to the April election, MARY MATHEWS and JOY GUSCOTT-MUELLER attended pollwatching training sponsored by the Lake County Clerk. In a follow-up meeting with the Lake County Clerk’s office, MARY MATHEWS addressed a number of issues affecting student voters at Lake Forest College. Her efforts inspired the Clerk’s office to explore the possibility of redistricting and consolidating the precincts for Lake Forest College in 2021. Kudos to Mary for taking action on the principles of the LWVUS “Making Democracy Work” program.

Stormwater threatened the homes and communities of many of us this year. As local government struggled to address this burgeoning issue, our League sponsored an informative program at Dickinson Hall. “It’s Raining, It’s Flooding” tackled stormwater management from a variety of perspectives with expert panelists.

In May, SANDY HART and LAURIE ROSE presented LWV-LF/LB “Know Your Government” awards to select-

ed students from the middle schools in Lake Bluff and Lake Forest. These awards highlight the importance of our mission as we seek to educate the next generation of voters.

Last, but not least, many thanks to those of you who spent countless hours as members of the Board of Directors, the 2019 Nominating Committee (MARGE BURDA, DIANE LLOYD, AMY KNUTSON STRACK, ANN HAMLIN, and MARYFRAN TROHA), the 2019 Budget Committee (KATIE ANDERSEN, MARY MATHEWS, STEVE POTSIC, and LAURIE ROSE), the 2019 Bylaws Committee (SALLY DAVIS, LAURIE ROSE, and NICKI SNOBLIN), and the 2019 Non-Partisan Policy Review Committee (ANN GRANT and MELANIE RUMMEL). Your work may be less visible to the public but it is vital to the work of our League.

As we approach our Centennial year, I ask each of you to join me in celebration of our League and its storied history. Here’s to an engaged, active, and fun 2019-2020 with LWV-LF/LB!

In League,
Laurie Rose, President