Eighty-five Years and Counting

The Making of the Leagues of Women Voters of Lake Forest and Lake Bluff
On the cover:
(Left) A suffragist, identity and year unknown. (Right) LWV-LFLB Co-President Jane Partridge representing suffragist Carrie Chapman Catt in the Lake Forest Day Parade, August 2011.

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The Making of the Leagues of Women Voters of Lake Forest and Lake Bluff

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... while the fight for Woman Suffrage and all it implied had started some forty years before you or I were born, the last half of it, the entry of women in full legal rights as citizens, the forty years of their use of those rights, and the valiant work of the League of Women Voters to help them do it wisely and well – all this we have seen and been a part of ...

What comes next we can hardly speculate....

One thing we do know – that the work we did for suffrage and the League of Women Voters brought us into close touch with some very remarkable human beings, gave us friendships that have endured and made all that has happened to us, good or bad, not only bearable but very worth while.

*Excerpt from a letter from Mary Morrison to Alice Hixon (LWV-LF President, 1933-1934), on the occasion of Mrs. Hixon’s 80th birthday, January 31, 1963*
LWV COMES TO LAKE FOREST

The year was 1925. On June 9th, a group of women met in the Lake Forest YMCA to organize the Lake Forest branch of the League of Women Voters of Illinois. The dues were to be $1.00 and the branch started with 72 members.

For America, it was the era of flaming youth, “The Jazz Age,” the time of the flapper, with knee-length skirts and bobbed hair. Prohibition—that noble experiment—was in force. Coolidge was President and there was unprecedented prosperity. Lindberg flew the Atlantic. Peter De Paolo was roaring around the Indianapolis Speedway in his Duesenberg and Al Capone was roaring around Chicago in his Duesenberg.

For the League, it was a time of flux. The valiant League ladies took on the formidable job of educating themselves and their community to be intelligent voters. They held a General Meeting every month at which noted speakers discussed the issues of the day, and the League had innumerable study groups. The legal status of women was taken on as a study subject in 1930, and the organization focused on county government, women on juries, the League of Nations and the World Court, child welfare, a vehicle tax, the General Disarmament Conference, the Illinois election system, and an intensive study of government and its operations.

In the late 1920s America danced the Charleston and the Black Bottom, and in dance marathons. Al Jolson sang and moving pictures talked. Then came the crash of 1929, and the era of the Roosevelts, both the president and his influential wife, the New Deal, NRA, AAA, TVA, WPA, and Social Security. The banks closed, a 60-foot head of George Washington was carved on Mount Rushmore, and a new epoch began.

For the League, the early 1930s brought the Annual Convention of the Illinois League, held in Peoria in 1932, which covered education, women in industry, social hygiene, and county government. At this time, it was suggested that the Lake Forest group start two study groups on county government—one for younger women and one for a more “advanced” group. In 1933, the President of the LWV of Lake Forest, Alice (Mrs. Frank) Hixon, became President of the Illinois League. Money was difficult and the support of the State and National Leagues was a point of debate and contention. Occasionally, when the State League maintained that it simply could not get...
along, a $40 or $50 gift would be sent from the local level and a note made that $100 would be sent at the end of the year, if funds were available. The 1934 treasury of the Lake Forest League showed a balance on hand in June of $3.91—after the dues were paid, there was a balance of $109.

LAKE BLUFF GETS A LEAGUE OF ITS OWN

In Lake Bluff, this was a time of both pride and aggravation. It was with more of a sense of frustration than accomplishment that Gertrude Northcott returned home from the polling place in the Lake Bluff Village Hall on Election Day, 1930. Although she had exercised her right to vote, she was not sure she had exercised it wisely. Many names on the ballot she knew little about. When she made her feelings known to her friends, many admitted that they, too, were inadequately prepared and shared her frustration in choosing candidates. She and her friends decided to do something about it and immediately thought of the League of Women Voters.

Mrs. Frank Hixon from the Lake Forest League was asked to speak to the group of Lake Bluff women in order to acquaint them with the work and purposes of the League. She convinced them that the League did help women become informed voters, and, before the year was over, the LWV of Lake Bluff, with 20 charter members, was formed. With a village population of only 1,462, this was a fair-sized group. At the first meeting the guest speaker was Lorado Taft’s beautiful young daughter, Emily, who later became Emily Taft Douglas, congresswoman and wife of Senator Paul Douglas.

One of the early meetings was a candidates meeting with ten speakers. The candidates who spoke were found to be not especially articulate. The minutes of that meeting state that it “began at the stroke of eight and finished a few minutes after nine.” By the second year the group was 30 members strong, but by 1934 membership had dropped, causing an inquiry from the State League. The response was that eight to ten members couldn’t pay the dues because of the Depression.

1936-1946

The 1930s saw the enactment of much legislation. The 1932 National Program recommended support for a system of federal, state, and local unemployment relief and unemployment compensation, and in 1934 members campaigned for a merit system for all branches of government. In those years the League was the only citizen group acting for the merit system
and, due at least in part to the League’s efforts, hundreds of federal jobs were removed from the spoils system by legislation passed in 1938. Also, in 1938, Pure Food and Drug laws, for which the League had worked since 1933, were enacted.

During the war years, the League solicited support for price control and rationing. It also supported increasing the income tax in an effort to finance the war, to the extent possible, by a pay-as-you-go system. The 1942-44 Program called for participation of the United States in the making and executing of plans for worldwide reconstruction and for postwar organizations for peace. The League supported disarmament plans and U.S. participation in the United Nations, and has continued to strongly support the U.N. throughout its history.

Through the late 1930s and early 1940s, the two local Leagues studied civil service, election laws, the merit system, old age security, housing standards, wages and living standards, the city budgets, township government, and the eight-hour day for women. Mrs. George Blossom gave a brief talk explaining the League’s opposition to the serious efforts being made by the National Women’s Party to amend the Constitution of the U.S. to give women equal rights legally with men and, in 1938, stated that the National Women’s Party was a comparatively small group with a loud voice. (Things have changed quite a bit since then—but Illinois remains a holdout in not ratifying CEDAW, the successor to the Equal Rights Amendment.)

In the 1940s, war was brewing and Pearl Harbor arrived on December 7, 1941. Jeeps were born, and the jukebox biggies were Glenn Miller, Tommy and Jimmy Dorsey, and Benny Goodman. Ginger Rogers “Flew Down to Rio,” and Rudolph flew to England. We lost Manila, Bataan, and Corregidor, and General MacArthur said he would return. Rationing began; FDR signed price controls; the U.S. and Britain landed a huge army in North Africa. Meatless Tuesdays made fish patriotic. Mrs. Miniver stayed at the Radio City Music Hall ten weeks, and Eleanor Roosevelt didn’t seem to stay anywhere more than ten minutes. Bing Crosby sang “White Christmas.”

Meanwhile, the National League was working for the short ballot and suffrage for the inhabitants of Washington, D.C. (In fact, we’re still advocating for a representative in Congress for D.C.) The women of the State League continued to work for a new Constitution for Illinois, a Motor Driver’s Li-
cense Law, a bill to permit women to sit on juries, the removal of racial dis-

Things moved quickly after D-Day and the invasion at the beaches at Nor-
mandy. Paris was liberated and penicillin was discovered. Truman became
the 33rd President and the atomic bomb was born to terrifying and terrible
effects. Baseball became a national passion, and the G.I. Bill of Rights and
DDT became popular. Ray Miland “Lost a Weekend,” “Oklahoma” was OK,
and Bing Crosby sang “The Bells of
St. Mary.”

At the local League, classes were
organized to instruct in marking the
ballot and League members acted
as watchers at the polls, as well as
calling voters to remind them of
their civic duty. The effective United
Nations and International Control of
Atomic Energy were studied. Dues were raised to $3.00, and in 1946, there
were 156 members in the Lake Forest League.

**1946-1956**

The years 1946 to 1956 brought the Fair Deal and the Atomic Age. Europe
and America felt the effects of the Marshall Plan, NATO, and the Cold War
with Russia. On the other side of the world was the Communist victory in
China and the Korean War. At home we had communistic espionage and
McCarthyism, and Eisenhower defeated Stevenson for the Presidency. Civil
defense became a watchword and bomb shelters were built throughout the
country. The top bracket of income tax was 93%, and public school segrega-
tion was ruled unconstitutional.

The League continued its work toward an informed electorate and its study
of world problems. Locally, the League had speakers from Lake Forest Col-
lege on inflation and taxation, on political science and the United Nations.
There was a panel discussion on the necessity of foreign trade and a debate
on the value of the Marshall Plan, the place of Western Germany in a world
economy, and the North Atlantic Pact. The League’s continued interest in en-
vironmental conservation allowed for a speaker on “Solutions to Pollution”
as well as a number of study groups, and “Conservation—a Study of Water
Resources” was added to the National Agenda in 1956.

At this time in history, the Nuremberg Trials began and wage and price con-
trols were removed. Fashion had the New Look from Paris, flying saucers
turned up in back yards, and televisions were in everyone’s living rooms. Mahatma Gandhi died and Truman beat Dewey in spite of the headlines. The long-playing record was invented; canasta swept the nation. The record for flying coast to coast was only 9 hours and 31 minutes. We sang “Some Enchanted Evening,” and gentlemen preferred blondes.

At the local League, the study of townships continued, as did the “Know Your County” study and the study on schools. There were candidate interviews, and a rally was put on in Market Square with balloons and a sound truck. The League interviewed local and county candidates before the 1952 election, and this biographical information was printed in the Lake For- ester. More than 4,000 copies of that issue were distributed throughout the county.

In American culture, Joe Louis retired from the ring undefeated. We heard “La Vie En Rose,” “Goodnight Irene,” and “Mona Lisa,” while Harry Truman was writing a nasty note to a Washington drama critic. Dagmar and Faye Emerson made cleavage a popular new word and had men glued to the TV. Princess Elizabeth had a baby boy and Shirley Temple retired.

During this time, the Lake Forest League had a radio chairman and a 15-minute twice-a-week show over the Waukegan radio station. There was a series on the U.N., township government, and interviews with candidates. Great cooperation developed between the League and Lake Forest College. In 1952, LFC Professor Hantke gave a series of lectures on the historical background of political parties, and the proceeds were turned over to the Scholarship Fund. The Lake Forest League conducted a trade survey and had a two-day seminar on world trade. Both Leagues worked on the Freedom Agenda and the Great Decisions program of 1955, in cooperation with the Council on Foreign Relations, which led directly to the Leagues being presented with the “World Understanding Award.”

The LWVUS was sharply attacked by the American Legion in 1956 for its series of “Freedom Agenda” discussions of the issues raised by congressional investigations, loyalty programs, and disputes over constitutional liberties. When the furor died down, it was felt that the League had gained respect for giving voice to the attitudes of the community by bringing these issues out into the open and was strengthened, rather than weakened, by the attack. On a more local level, in 1950, the two Leagues worked with Leagues throughout Illinois to help put through the Gateway Amendment.

History moved on, and soon the poodle haircut was in and “The King and I”
was on Broadway. King Farouk lost his throne and “I Love Lucy” was on TV. Chlorophyll was discovered, Mount Everest was conquered, and Alfred Kinsey and Polly Adler wrote about matters of sex. Ernest Hemingway crashed a plane in Africa and topped it by winning the Nobel Prize in 1954. Willie Mays lit up the baseball world and Albert Einstein said he would rather be a plumber. Liberace simplified symphonies on TV and Jackie Gleason replaced Uncle Miltie ... and Bing Crosby sang “High Society.”

There was a panel discussion on the U.S. trade policy where a bright young Chairman of the Board of Bell & Howell, Charles Percy, spoke.

At the local League, a recreation study led to the establishment of the Playground and Recreation Board in 1954, and a “Know your Town” survey was conducted and published. A local printer quoted $22 for each issue of the Bulletin, and Northern Trust offered to produce it for $2.50. The Lake Bluff League wrote and published “Living in Lake Bluff” every four years and it was distributed free of charge to all residents. The League also presented a “Know Your Government” Award annually to a Lake Bluff Junior High School student. One very successful Lake Bluff project was the establishment of the school caucus at the request of the local school board in 1955. Meanwhile, the Lake Forest League studied city planning for the City of Lake Forest and played a big part in passing the school referendum and in educating the town to the needs for the Deerpath, Sheridan, Everett, and Cherokee Schools.

1956-1966

Then came the space age. America had John Kennedy and Camelot and the Bay of Pigs. Nehru visited the White House and Elvis was swinging and wiggling. Frank Sinatra sang “September of My Years” and Professor Higgins made it rain in Spain.

And the Leagues didn’t let up. Dues were raised to $5.00, and the Lake Forest League’s “Know Your Town” survey was published and distributed. The local agenda included a study of the home rule powers granted to the City by its charter and a study of county government with special reference to the townships in which the League is located. Conservation and city beautification became an item and flood plains became an important issue.

The Lake Forest League began the 1960s by urging the City to seek professional planning advice on a continuing basis to aid and counsel the Plan Commission and to review the City Plan, with special provisions for conservation and beautification. There was a panel discussion on the U.S. trade
policy where a bright young Chairman of the Board of Bell & Howell, Charles Percy, spoke. The League held workshops on conservation, election laws, state revenue, and something called “Con-Con.”

In 1960, on the occasion of the 80th birthday of Alice Hixon, one of its founders, the LWV of Lake Forest prepared a commemorative scrapbook of letters and reminiscences from friends, local notables, and fellow League members. (One of these letters is reproduced on page 22.)

In 1961, the Lake Forest League had 250 members. The League recommended and supported an Architectural Board of Review for the Lake Forest Plan Commission and sponsored a panel discussion between the four township assessors as to how their work affected school finance. The League provided speakers to other organizations on the revenue article, election laws, and conservation. The establishment of a Forest Preserve District was one of the biggest efforts. Voters Service saw to it that more than 1,000 new names were registered before the General Election of 1961.

In 1962, the Lake Bluff League again became concerned with nominating procedures in the Village, culminating in an eight-page booklet that was mailed to every household. This booklet explained the nominating processes for the various public boards and indicated the ways in which the processes could be improved. The Park Board subsequently asked the Lake Bluff League to suggest a procedure for the selection of qualified candidates for the election in 1965. The League proposed an area caucus system that was used for Park Board nominations for many years. The study item for 1961-62 was “Evaluation of the Village Plan With Emphasis on Zoning.” Members reviewed the newly adopted Tec-Search Village Plan and found 11 areas in which they recommended further study. These areas included the adequacy of zoning regulations, the need for more school and park lands, future water and sewage disposal facilities, and the ability of the Village to pay for its needs.

Soyuz and Apollo changed our thoughts about space, and children learned how to count down from ten.

In the 1960s Kennedy was assassinated, Johnson became President, and the Great Society was born. America started wars against poverty, school segregation, and North Vietnam. Everyone wore suits, shirts, and shoes bearing the Italian influence. Not only that, they were also wash ’n’ wear.

Meanwhile, the Twist became a new way to move and Johnson not only brought in Medicare, but he also showed the nation a new way to pick up a beagle. Charlton Heston started to rewrite the Bible, Soyuz and Apollo changed our thoughts about space, and children learned how to count down from ten.
Sixties culture took the world by storm as four young men from England with funny haircuts changed the music world and teenagers everywhere. Frank Sinatra and Mia Farrow got married and divorced and Elizabeth Taylor got married and divorced and married and divorced. Travel became even more exciting when side trips to Cuba became routine.

**1966-1976**

Between the years 1966 and 1976, the League continued its study and action, and won a few battles. The Constitutional Convention was called and a new Constitution for Illinois became effective in 1970. The League had a great deal of input into the writing of the new Constitution. The Lake Michigan Interleague Group was organized in 1967, followed some years later by the League of Women Voters of Lake County.

During these years, Chicago and Lake Forest suffered under four feet of snow and skis were the only way to get around for a few days. On Broadway, a show called “Hair” astonished playgoers when some of the play actors took it all off. The Beatles gave up personal appearances and Duke Ellington celebrated his 70th birthday. San Francisco became the place to let your hair grow, take your shoes off, and carry flowers.

*The Lake Bluff League studied equal housing opportunities in Lake Bluff as well as local schools and education.*

Meanwhile, the Lake Forest League issued the Lake Forest portrait, replacing the Facts for Lake Foresters. It was intended to last five years but had to be reprinted in three. Memorial Funds were established honoring Mrs. Granger Brown and Miss Julia Mae Hamilton. The League studied and approved the caucus system in Lake Forest; it also studied the official plan with emphasis on slow and medium housing as well as recreation needs, and made recommendations. It studied school finance and conducted a survey and study of privacy in recordkeeping in the schools.

The Lake Bluff League also included a study and evaluation of equal housing opportunities in Lake Bluff and a study of local schools and education. Several problems that required continued League work were improvement of the antiquated municipal sewer systems, provisions for greater citizen participation in the nominating procedures for some governmental bodies, and the replacement of obsolete building zoning ordinances as well as those ordinances that affected the appearance of Lake Bluff. In its 39-year history from creation to 1969, the Lake Bluff League grew from its charter membership of 20 women to 115 women.
Throughout America in the early 1970s, campus and city rioting seemed to be occurring every day. Nixon became President; Carole Channing became Dolly; Barbra Streisand became Funny Girl. Chicago had the Democratic convention, the Chicago 7, and the Hoffmans, Julius and Abby. In Paris cubists argued about the shape of a table and in Vietnam the fighting continued.

Meanwhile, the Lake Forest League had Legislative Brunches and a Legislative Dinner at which the League entertained legislators and their wives (or husbands), assisted in a seminar on Practical Politics at Lake County College, and sponsored a panel discussion on the RTA. The League also sponsored a panel discussion by experts on international trade. Some members became mobile registrars and registered new voters (when 18 became the voting age) at Lake Forest College and Lake Forest High School.

Moving through the 1970s, Woodstock had a music festival and Israel had a six-day war. After Billy Jean King beat Bobby Riggs, everyone took up tennis. Bonnie and Clyde showed the nation that nostalgia could be fun. On TV a bigot named Archie Bunker became a hero, and a second-rate burglary took place at a place called Watergate.

The Lake County League, of which Lake Forest and Lake Bluff were members, printed a Voters’ Guide before elections, and local Leaguers sat in a booth in Market Square and distributed as many as 3,000 of them. A good many of the League’s studies involved environmental quality—Consensus on Pesticides, Air Pollution, Shoreline Erosion, Flood Plain and Watershed, Land Use and Solid Waste Management.

During this time in history, Spiro resigned as Vice President and the Forsythe Saga took the place of the Sunday Night Movie. Julie and Tricia got married in the White House, and Jackie got married in Greece. Public television provided coverage of the Senate investigations. Nixon resigned and Ford became the first non-elected President.

In Lake Forest, the League started a bridge marathon and members went to the courts in Waukegan to see how justice is done. Members began a garden and house walk, which was quite successful and took the place of the annual finance drive. Dues were raised to $10 in 1970 and to $15 in 1973, with a clause allowing senior citizens to pay only $10. The League found that its membership requirements were exclusionary and men were invited to join. As a result, League considered the desirability of changing its name.
1976-1986

Through the decade of 1976 to 1986, Jimmy Carter followed Ford as President. Under his administration, the U.S. turned over the Panama Canal to Panama, the focus was on human rights, and the hostage crisis failed when three helicopters went down, but all hostages were let free just after midnight. Inflation and debt shadowed the country and Ronnie Reagan came in as President. These years were marked by the savings and loan debacle, and in 1982 unemployment was at 8%. It was bonanza for those with CDs bringing 17%. John Hinckley attempted to assassinate the President. High school students increasingly became more interested in making good grades to get into college than in challenging the status quo.

The Lake Forest and Lake Bluff Leagues helped establish the Lake County Public Health Department and supported the movement for a Lake County Forest Preserve.

Meanwhile, the Lake Forest and Lake Bluff Leagues helped establish the Lake County Public Health Department and supported the movement for a Lake County Forest Preserve, with emphasis on acquiring land along the floodplain of the Des Plaines River. The League was well known in both communities for registering voters and hosting debates and forums. For years, the League and the American Association of University Women co-sponsored a Great Decisions group through the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations.

1986-1996

Moving through the mid-1980s to mid-1990s, Alice Pierce, president of the Lake Forest League in 1989, had this to say of the two local Leagues: “Sixty-one years later we find we are still very closely aligned. Many of our studies and concerns are the same or overlap. Combining our membership will make us a more efficient organization, being able to lend more expertise to the communities, keeping them informed on more issues. Recently we held our first joint annual meeting where the membership voted on our local program items. Lake Forest will work on (1) continued attention to youth problems... (2) Continued attention to the needs of young... (3) Support of the 1978 Comprehensive Plan for LF, (4) Continued study of the need for additional pet regulations, i.e. leash laws, (5) Continued attention to the LF Caucus system, (6) Update of the Lake Forest Portrait, (7) Update study on gun control, (8) Study the feasibility of an elected school board for the city.
Lake Bluff elected the following program items: (1) Study the existing recycling program and its proposed expansion, (2) Shoreline study, and (3) Real estate. Lake Forest had recently completed its shoreline study and was able to assist Lake Bluff. Lake Bluff had already studied recycling and now this was a major concern in Lake Forest. Clearly, the Leagues could be of considerable help to each, saving much time and manpower. In this way, the Lake Bluff and Lake Forest Leagues combined in 1989 to become the current League of Women Voters of the Lake Forest/Lake Bluff Area.

This period in time saw younger women join the workplace, changing the atmosphere at the now-combined local League. As Phyllis Albrecht, who came to Lake Bluff in the 1960s and acted as president both for the Lake Bluff League and for the combined League, said, “Look at the list of presidents! Their first names are not recorded, because they were known as Mrs. (male).” It is noteworthy that all these stay-at-home, bright and talented women, with the exception of Ginnie Fiester Frederick, Mary Pappas, and Ginny Alexander (from Lake Bluff), were identified by their husbands’ names.

Through the mid-1990s, Bush I was President, with Quayle his V.P. The Gulf War was devastating. It was then that McLuhan’s “the medium is the message” really hit home. The Cold War was over, and Gorbachev was our friend. The Beijing Platform supported women’s health, education, and economic empowerment, and gave women from around the world the chance to work on problems together.

At the local level, in 1995, the Village of Lake Bluff and the City of Lake Forest appointed the League to lead a community celebration of the 75th anniversary of women’s suffrage. The League tackled this with its usual gusto and created several events to mark the celebration and highlight the role of women in the communities. First, the League honored local women in government at a reception hosted by Northern Trust Bank and researched and printed a list of LF/LB women who had served in elected positions. Second, it coordinated with local organizations each of which nominated a “Women’s Emancipation Through Fashion” at Great Lakes. The Pioneer Press highlighted the award winners. Actresses representing suffragists circulated among the guests. Additionally, the women of the League entered the 4th of July and Lake Forest Day parades dressed as suffragettes, including many mother-daughter teams.

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At the State League convention that year, the local League won the awards for Best League Fundraiser in Illinois (for the Suffrage Celebration), Largest League Membership Increase, and Most Professional League Newsletter.

In the national government, the Republican-led Congress, under the leadership of Newt Gingrich, shut down the government and President Bill Clinton worked across the aisle to balance the budget. Welfare reform followed in 1996, and the League worked locally to see how the government and local agencies could help mostly single mothers to get on board in two years. NAFTA passed with bipartisan efforts, but some members of the League saw the pitfalls coming down the road.

The newly combined League sponsored studies on leaf burning and local nominating procedures (the caucuses). Four candidate forums were hosted in those two years. The League gained 45 new members. Members spoke three times at City and Village council meetings in support of cablecasting District 65 APT meetings, cablecasting Lake Forest City Council meetings, and proceeding with the Lake Bluff Open Lands plan for the Skokie River Preserve and Trail. The bridge club was maintained as well as the Great Decisions foreign affairs discussion group. Additionally, through these years, the League published two preschool and child care directories; actively recruited funding, supplies, and volunteers for the Lake County Kids First Health Fair; and offered about ten programs for members each year, from solid waste disposal and recycling to teens at risk, gun control, school funding, affordable senior housing, local nominating procedures, alternative sentencing, and preventing violence in the lives of women and children.

1996-2011

By the close of the 1990s, Monica Lewinsky had “messed up” the lives of Bill and Hillary, and much worthwhile legislation was wiped out. The Mideast Peace talks might have been productive if Clinton’s time had not run out.

At the national level, the League was working to build support for comprehensive health care reform, fight to protect motor-voter laws from Congressional challenges, oppose term limits, protect funding for public financing of
presidential elections, pass comprehensive Congressional campaign finance reform, defeat the balanced budget constitutional amendment, defeat or limit the so-called regulatory reform legislations, and fight attempts to silence nonprofits. In coalition and endorsed actions, the League was working on funding for the United Nations, welfare reform, the safe drinking water act, the Beijing platform, the assault weapons ban, balancing the federal budget, adequate funding for the federal election commission, and freeing network time for presidential candidates.

Locally, the League heard a comprehensive report from Cynthia Maloney on charter schools in Illinois, resulting in its nonsupport at that time. Three League members went to the National Convention and learned that the National League was trying to go all out for digital communication. In 1997, long-time League member Roycealee Wood was appointed to the Board of Directors for A Safe Place, the Lake County domestic violence shelter, counseling and advocacy service. Also in 1997, the Kids First Health Fair, then in its fifth year, was a great success, serving roughly 2,200 children by offering back-to-school physicals, screenings, and immunizations as well as unlimited books and backpacks filled with school supplies.

During this time, the local League was very active in the State League’s action on campaign finance reform. The task force in charge of the issue released a final report entitled “Tainted Democracy: How Money Distorts the Election Process in Illinois and What Must Be Done to Reform the Campaign Finance System.” In October of 1997, the local League hosted Eugene Hotchkiss, President Emeritus of Lake Forest College and Chair of the “Lake Forest/Lake Bluff Round Table” as he spoke about civility in public discourse at the Fall Members and Prospective Members Luncheon.

The League, busy as usual, spent the beginning of 1998 preparing for its Panel Discussion on Affordable Senior Housing in Lake Forest and Lake Bluff, which touched on many important issues. As the year progressed, members looked forward to a community forum on campaign finance reform and received thanks from Lake Forest City Manager Robert Kiely, Jr., for encouraging the City to undertake the very successful special census.

In the late 1990s, voters in Illinois became more aware (partly through efforts of the League) of the costs of Illinois’ campaign finance system to the average citizen. Voters learned of deals between Commonwealth Edison and Illinois Power and state lawmakers that locked Illinois consumers into the highest utility rates in the Midwest. Also, Illinois’ citizens learned about
hidden cable TV costs, as well as deals between the tobacco industry and legislative leaders, resulting in the maintenance of tobacco-related Medicaid costs.

**By the turn of the new century, perspectives were changing on the North Shore, and the League hosted a talk on “Diversity on the North Shore—An Asian Perspective.”**

Meanwhile, the National League was alerting members to various political issues, including the Campaign on Finance Reform and prevention of the undermining of motor-voter laws. In addition, the National League released a report on the U.N. and U.N. reform efforts in 1997-1998. Locally, the League worked to update the community preschool booklet, as well as participating in coalitions with other community groups regarding civility in public discourse and a healthier community partnership, and developing strategies for studying township government and presenting a consensus process for affordable senior housing.

At the close of 1998, the League conducted a survey on Medicare reform, hosted a panel discussion on home rule, and facilitated community meetings for Partners for Progress, a community partnership of Lake Forest, Lake Bluff, and Knollwood. By the start of the new year, the local League sponsored two presentations by Jeanne Hanson of the Barrington League covering “from dollhouse to White House... fostering leadership in girls and women.” The League hosted a Talk on Trash with the director of SWALCO, a forum entitled “Smart Growth: Let’s do it right!,” discussing environmentally sustainable growth, and a political discussion: “The Caucus Process and the Two Party System: Lake Forest, Lake Bluff Elections at a Crossroad.”

In an opportunity to see the county board in action, the Lake County League and its six member Leagues sponsored a program on “County Board Organization and Issues.” At the State level, big things were happening as the Board of Directors authorized the filing of a lawsuit in federal court challenging the constitutionality of Illinois’ 1999 Tuition Tax Credit.

By the turn of the new century, perspectives were changing on the North Shore, and the League hosted a talk on “Diversity on the North Shore—An Asian Perspective,” held to commemorate Women’s History Month. The issue of diversity was also brought up on the member survey, looking into ways for the League to work with underrepresented communities.

The local Leagues also had members doing work on several study committees, including Shields Township and Charter Schools. The issue of civility in the local communities became a pivotal issue for the League, and a panel
discussion on respect and civility was hosted in collaboration with Partners for Progress. In connection with its work on “smart growth,” the League was asked by the Center for Neighborhood Technology to participate in the Lake County area.

On September 11th, 2001, the nation was permanently changed in many ways. In the issue of the League Lines directly following the attacks, president Carol Gilbert stated that “September 11th was a day to remember. As I write this, on September 16th, so very many people are saying ‘everything will change now.’ Some of the changes are perhaps overdue. Let’s hope all of the changes will be well considered. The way in which we conduct our daily lives forms our character as a nation.” The lessons learned following September 11th were ones that the League always knew; they were concepts that, as Carol Gilbert noted, “we try to exemplify daily through the work we do.”

Through the early years of the 2000s, the local League focused a great deal on education, receiving a generous offer to fund a legislative internship program for high school students, as well as sponsoring a community forum on school funding. In the local branch of a nationwide effort, the League worked on the Illinois Student Vote program. The League worked additionally to inform voters on the 2002 Lake Forest High School referendum, as well as endorsing the School District 65 referendum.

In 2002, former League president Paula Dubourdieu began the program “Connections,” inspired by her love of discourse with League women and the desire to extend that fellowship. Her aim was to connect people through conversation. Also, the League worked to educate its members, holding an interactive workshop called “You Be the Judge,” allowing members to look at actual case history and give a judgment.

At National League, the early 2000s marked a push to ratify the pivotal Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). For the Illinois League, the issue was the passing of the Equal Rights Amendment in Illinois. The ERA Task Force of the American Association of University Women of Illinois worked very hard with the assistance of the League, although the amendment unfortunately did not pass.

As war in Iraq continued through 2003, the National League urged then-
President Bush to continue working with the United Nations to resolve the situation with Iraq. The League held the opinion that international cooperation was essential to resolving the conflict, as well as dealing with the rising issue of terrorism. The League educated its members on the Patriot Act and the debate on how to maintain freedoms while assuring the security of the American people. The National League additionally looked at the risks to voters, including (1) troubles with voter registration, (2) erroneous purging from the registration rolls, (3) problems with the new ID requirement, (4) problems with voting systems, and (5) failure to count provisional ballots.

The League educated its members on the Patriot Act and the debate on how to maintain freedoms while assuring the security of the American people.

hosting a forum and panel discussion on the USA Patriot Act entitled “Patriotism or Paranoia? Balancing Domestic Security and Civil Liberties.”

For the Illinois League, a key issue during this time was the abolition of the death penalty, which the League strongly supported. The local League tackled all of these issues head-on, hosting a forum and panel discussion on the USA Patriot Act entitled “Patriotism or Paranoia? Balancing Domestic Security and Civil Liberties.”

On a lighter note, the League continued to host entertaining events for fundraising purposes, including the “Dead Presidents” cocktail party, as well as providing excellent entries in the Lake Bluff 4th of July parade. Additionally, the League took time to honor long-time League member Betty Buker by awarding her honorary member status in 2004. In a celebration at the start of 2005, the Illinois League came together for its 85th birthday at the Ritz Carlton.

Inspired by Doris Schapira, one of three LWVUS observers to the U.N., local member Happie Datt set up an international committee within the local chapter with hopes of effecting grassroots change. The new committee hosted an extremely successful program, “Why the U.N.?” featuring a speaker from the United Nations. Meanwhile, the local League presented a forum on historic preservation in Lake Bluff and worked on its voter registration drive, as well as hosting a brown-bag discussion of home rule in Lake Forest. Additionally, the League looked at Illinois’ flawed tax system in a program at the start of 2005.

It was an exciting event for the local League to be selected by the Open World Program to host five Russian delegates arriving to spend a week observing their political counterparts in action and living with American families to become familiar with their lifestyles and community and cultural lives. The League also continued to work on educating voters, asked by State Senator Link to assist in disseminating information on the new Illinois early voting law. The League also turned its focus to Emergency Preparedness, asking “Are We Ready?” in a panel discussion of public safety personnel.
In 2008 a multi-League symposium entitled “Our Climate Matters” examined coal plant emissions, carbon, and alternative energy. One conclusion was, “The good news is that the U.S.’s environmental problems are not the worst—China’s are worse. And in our current global community, that’s also the bad news.” In that year our local League also participated in an LWVUS study on immigration policy, a very contentious topic across the nation.

In fall of that year several well-attended candidate forums were held for county-wide as well as state and congressional offices. LWVIL also did its part to inform local Leagues and educate voters about the call for a Constitutional Convention. Three of our League members attended the National Convention in Portland, Oregon that year.

In response to growing concern across the nation about the cost of health care, LWV-LFLB and LWVLC jointly held a forum, “Health Care: How to Cure the Chronic Crisis,” with a film and two panelists. The local League continued its activism in the cause of affordable housing in Lake Forest. A new call to action came in the form of the Fair Map Amendment, an effort intended to prevent the usual gerrymandering resulting from redistricting after the 2010 Census. The Fair Map Amendment would require the new map to be drawn by an independent commission rather than political party leaders. Unfortunately, League efforts across the state to get the referendum on the ballot fell short of the required number, and the voters lost the opportunity to have a voice in this crucial process.

In 2010 LWV-LFLB lost a beloved and respected long-time member with the passing of Virginia Fiester Frederick. She was the first women elected to the Lake Forest City Council, in 1974, and went on to become a State Representative from 1979 to 1994. In fall of that year Leagues around the country celebrated the 90th birthday of the League of Women Voters. LWV-LFLB followed suit with a Birthday Bash, celebrating the efforts of the women who brought the League into existence, often at great sacrifice. The local League also hosted and co-hosted candidate forums that attracted overflow crowds. In at least one forum hosted by other area Leagues, Tea Party–affiliated candidates and their followers caused great upheavals (even resulting in threats to the League moderator for her efforts to restore order), but fortunately our own local forums were not affected by this mob action.

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“Cuba and the United States: Will they Ever Be Friends?” was the topic of a thought-provoking presentation by Dr. Alberto Coll of DePaul University in an event sponsored by the local League along with AAUW in spring of 2011. Illinois’ fiscal crisis also garnered a lot of attention that spring, with its budget and pension funding woes. John Bouman of the Responsible Budget Coalition and State Senators Susan Garrett and Terry Link spoke to League members and guests at a forum.

As the 2000s came to a close and the next decade began, the League (at the national, state, and local levels) saw its priorities shifting from the original concerns of its first members. Support for women’s suffrage had become support for international cooperation in conflict resolution. Concerns about women in the workforce became concerns about environmental conservation and economic issues. Some things, however, have never changed and likely never will. The League maintains a key role in education (of voters, citizens, women, and more), while promoting the high importance of the voice of women in politics. There is no time in the foreseeable future in which the need for the League of Women Voters will be diminished.
My dear Alice,

Welcome to the ranks of the four score years and over. In spite of the gloomy warnings of the Book of Common Prayer in this matter, strength at this point is not necessarily “Labor and Sorrow”. I seem to know a good many nonagenarians who still get around fairly well and whose wits are a great pleasure to their friends and a comfort to themselves. If you have the luck to have pretty good health there’s a special kind of pleasure to be gotten out of life at this period.

You don’t worry too much any more, knowing a) that you can’t personally do much about it and b) it’s surprising how often people and things work themselves out in reasonable fashion.

You know the bell may ring any time, but one who has had as useful and rich a life as you has learned to take things as they come and it’s such fun to look back over the past. Mercifully the edge is off the harder moments and you can laugh at idiocies, your own and others that used to exasperate you, while the love and affection you’ve had, the work and even the troubles you’ve shared acquire a warm, glowing quality like those golden days of Indian Summer that you cherish the more because they may be brief.

It’s an extraordinary time to have lived through, these last eighty years, for anybody and especially for women. I had this brought home to me a few years ago when I was having dinner with one of my sons in West Hartford. His house is at the end of a fair sized lake and when the trees are out you are hardly aware of other houses. We stepped out on the terrace to the south and there, rising over the trees to the west came Sputnik—plain to be seen in spite of the glow of the city lights, rising slowly and with absolute steadiness moving across the lake and down below the trees to the east.

It was deeply moving to think about, this first crack in the door, beyond which lay what none of us could even begin to imagine.

And then I remembered that when I was a small girl of five in Richmond, Indiana, we had an English governess whose idea of what to do with little girls
when they were not having lessons was to button them up in their hats and coats and take them walking up and down the streets. No rowdy games or tomboy antics!

The main street of Richmond was a part of the old National Road that went from Baltimore, Maryland to St. Louis, which you may remember was the take off for the Oregon Trail. During the four years she was with us we must have seen as many as a dozen Covered Wagons - buckets strung along the axles, dogs trotting behind and children peering out from the back - go down that street and out to St. Louis and beyond. They were the last stragglers of that once great army, of course, the railroads had been put through some twenty years before. But there they were.

I knew I was an old woman, but in one lifetime, however long, to have made the jump from Covered Wagon to Sputnik made you think very hard indeed.

And while the fight for Woman Suffrage and all it implied had started some forty years before you or I were born, the last half of it, the entry of women in full legal rights as citizens, the forty years of their use of those rights, and the valiant work of the League of Women Voters to help them do it wisely and well - all this we have seen and been a part of (yours a far larger part than mine). The changes in the pattern of men’s and women’s lives, of their thinking, their standards and points of view would be incredible if it hadn’t as it were ‘snuck up on us’, so that living with and in it we were hardly aware of the change.

What comes next we can hardly speculate. Personal and/or world annihilation is certainly not out of the picture but somehow I don’t think the last is going to happen. Reading “We Seven”, the astronauts’ story of what has been done so far, looks as if we were both skillful and very steady in trying to find out what lies behind the door of space in spite of all the alarums and excursions.

One thing we do know - that the work we did for suffrage and the League of Women Voters brought us into close touch with some very remarkable human beings, gave us friendships that have endured and made all that has happened to us, good or bad, not only bearable but very worth while.

Good luck, dear friend.

Mary Morrison
## Past Presidents of the League of Women Voters of the Lake Forest/Lake Bluff Area

### LAKE FOREST

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<tr>
<th>Years</th>
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<tr>
<td>1925-1927</td>
<td>Mrs. George Richardson</td>
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<td>1927-1929</td>
<td>Mrs. Roger Bronson</td>
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<tr>
<td>1929-1931</td>
<td>Mrs. Martha Sarver</td>
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<tr>
<td>1931-1933</td>
<td>Miss Catherine Colvin</td>
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<td>1933-1934</td>
<td>Mrs. Frank P. Hixon</td>
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<td>1934-1935</td>
<td>Mrs. George Blossom, Jr.</td>
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<td>1936-1939</td>
<td>Mrs. Donald J. Scott</td>
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<td>Mrs. Dwight Ingram</td>
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<td>Mrs. Hynes Pinter</td>
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<td>Mrs. Francis Beidler II</td>
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<td>1943-1944</td>
<td>Mrs. Louis Hardin</td>
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<td>Mrs. Edwin Winter</td>
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<td>1958-1961</td>
<td>Miss Julie Mae Hamilton</td>
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<td>Mrs. Gordon Wilson</td>
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<td>1983-1984</td>
<td>Mrs. E. Charles Schuetz</td>
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<td>1988-1989</td>
<td>Mrs. Vincent Mihalik &amp; Mrs. Ronald Pierce</td>
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### LAKE BLUFF

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<td>Mrs. Harry Harndon</td>
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<td>Mrs. Joseph Becker</td>
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<td>Mrs. Henry Spruth</td>
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<td>Mrs. John Maloney</td>
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<td>1944-1946</td>
<td>Mrs. Stuart Ullmann</td>
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<td>Mrs. Walter Hall</td>
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<td>Mrs. Fred Hunter</td>
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<td>Mrs. James Velde</td>
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<td>1952-1954</td>
<td>Mrs. Melvin Reibert</td>
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<td>1954-1956</td>
<td>Mrs. Russell Baker</td>
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<td>1956-1958</td>
<td>Mrs. Chester Ensley</td>
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<td>1958-1960</td>
<td>Mrs. C. Donnan Fiester</td>
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<td>1960-1962</td>
<td>Mrs. Philip Schofield</td>
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<td>Mrs. Paul Schofield</td>
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<td>Mrs. Shelby Yastrow</td>
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<td>Mrs. Martin Rosenthal</td>
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<td>Mrs. T. M. Hamlin &amp; Mrs. Lloyd F. Yakes, Jr.</td>
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