

# LWV-LF/LB Board Report for 2017-2018

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What a phenomenal year for the League of Women Voters of Lake Forest/Lake Bluff Area (LWV-LF/LB)! From registering voters and campaigns to “Get Out the Vote,” to marching at events (Women’s March! March for Our Lives! Parades!), and stimulating programs, we were focused, engaged, and visible! Let’s celebrate a sampling of our accomplishments this year.

## Action, Marches, Advocacy, and More!

We ended last June with electing new board members and sent five delegates to the Illinois State Convention: **Beth Berg, Marge Burda, Wyn Cain, Mary Mathews** and **Cindy Morehead**. The delegates attended pre-convention workshops about environmental justice; effectively using social media; discussion controversial topics; engaging new members; developing leaders; advocacy; and government consolidation. They addressed many ideas, including:

- President Bonnie Cox called for more publicity efforts, sharing successes, and pursuing partnerships.
- Sending an advocacy letter to Illinois Governor Bruce Rauner regarding the lack of a state budget
- Recommending that the Abolition of the Electoral College position be put to a vote at the LWVUS convention in 2018.
- Diversity continues to be a goal of all of the Leagues.

Summertime kicked off a number of opportunities to reach out to our communities in two terrific parades: Lake Bluff Fourth of July parade and the Lake Forest Day Parade in August. We earned second-place honors in both! Thank you to all of our parade participants: **Beth Berg, Jim Borg, Sharon Borg, Wyn Cain, Happie Datt, Ann Grant, Robin Huszagh, Carol Russ,** and **Marilyn Turchi**

We had three key goals this year:

- Visibility
- Engage Members
- Community Outreach (impact and action)

One component to achieve these goals was to fill the communications director role. **Amy Knutson Strack** joined the board in July and got busy working with the very talented communications team of **Carol Russ, Diane and Stan Sanderson, Nicki Snoblin, Ann Hamlin,** and **Mary Mathews**. Together they streamlined processes, helped committees achieve their communications goals, and focused on League branding and awareness. Amy worked on promotions and media outreach. Our media presence increased in print and online media this year, and we had more engagement in social media. Kudos to the entire team for their efforts behind-the-scenes to make League work more engaging for our audiences!

LWVIL held its annual fundraiser and State-of-the-State Luncheon in September at the Union League of Chicago. The topic, “Shining the Light of Truth: Keeping the Heat On,” included speakers Sen. Dick Durbin, Renee Ferguson, an award winning investigative reporter, and LWVIL President Bonnie Cox. All three noted the leadership and contributions of Ida B. Wells, who was a journalist, newspaper editor, suffragette, and early leader of the civil rights movement. Many LWV-LF/LB members attended this moving event: **Judy Armstrong, Jim Borg, Sharon Borg, Dave Cain, Wyn Cain, Jeanne Kearby, Mary Mathews, Aurie Pennick, Helen Potsic,** and **Steve Potsic**. The LWVIL also launched its campaign to fundraise \$200,000 by 2020 to celebrate the League’s 100-year anniversary.

**Marilyn Turchi** and **Wyn Cain** participate once a month in a Membership Leadership Development (MDL) conference call with Jan Dorner, our League’s LWVIL MLD State Coach. We discuss Monthly

Guidance reports such as encouraging volunteers to take action; flexible leadership; and engagement for impact. MLD training is available in July, including during the upcoming National Convention. We definitely took the theme, “Be in the room where it happens,” to heart and joined many Leagues from the area for this year’s Women’s March in January. From Buckingham Fountain to Grant Park to Federal Plaza, you could find **Sharon Borg, Marge Burda, Wyn Cain, Joyce Foster, Ann Grant, Julienne Grant,** and **Amy Knutson Strack** out in force. The group marched, texted and Tweeted. In addition, Wyn was featured in the *Daily Herald* from eight local organizations from the entire Chicagoland area. We were the only League highlighted; great publicity for our League and LWV!

LWV-LF/LB and other local Leagues have been following the Chicago-Milwaukee Intercity Rail Corridor proposal, which was first presented more than two years ago. Last year our chapter submitted comments to the Federal Railroad Administration asking for more detailed information or an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). A Citizens for ACTION group held a community forum April 25. LWV-LF/LB, along with Lake Forest Open Lands Association, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and the Army Corps of Engineers, have voiced concerns about the environmental impacts for the entire community, including the Middlefork Savanna, nearby schools, and Lake Forest High School sports fields. **Wyn Cain** spoke at the forum about the League’s concerns and encouraged residents to learn about the project and contact their legislators.

Following the shooting incident at Stoneman Douglas High School in Florida, students have taken the lead to organize marches to enact gun control measures. Our League members **Marge Burda, Joyce Foster,** and **Wyn Cain** bundled up and joined the March 24 “March for Our Lives” event in Vernon Hills on a very cold, windy day. Their spirits were warmed by a very enthusiastic and large crowd!

The work our board members do extends beyond our local League. In April, **Amy Knutson Strack** was appointed to the state board of directors of LWV of Illinois. In January, **David Mueller** was appointed by the LWV of Illinois to serve on the LWV-Lake Michigan Region board of directors. By stepping up to these positions, they also positively represent LWV-LF/LB in their work. Thank you!

## Membership

Our membership continues to grow — now 143 members! — and with that comes new volunteer opportunities and events. The Membership Committee, led by **Marilyn Turchi** and **Linda Bartmes** (hospitality), worked throughout the year with key events: Fall Kickoff, Holiday Luncheon, Program Planning meeting, and the Annual Meeting in June. In their roles, they also welcome new members, update the database, prepare the membership directory, provide address labels for other committees, and keep all correspondence (and fine little details) on-track. They also manage all aspects of hospitality.

At our annual Fall Kickoff on September 10, we celebrated civic engagement by honoring the long-time service of League member **Margaret Hart**. Shoreacres provided an exquisite backdrop on Lake Michigan on a picture-perfect day — we truly could not have asked for better weather. She is an example to us all with her years of involvement and dedication to many organizations. Lake Bluff President Kathleen O’Hara and Lake Forest Mayor Robert Lansing offered an overview of the state of affairs of their respective local governments during the event.

Froggy's in Highwood offered the festive venue for the Annual Holiday Luncheon in December. As always, the food was delicious and the company great! Barry Bradford offered an entertaining presentation, "The History of Satire in America." During the luncheon, **Cindy Morehead** received the 2017 Carrie Catt Chapman Award, which she greatly deserved for her many years of dedicated service to this chapter. During active and challenging times, she has seen it all with a variety of contributions. Her thoughtful deliberation, experience, generosity, and graciousness are valued highly by League members.

**Diane Lloyd** hosted the annual Program Planning meeting at her home. This annual meeting included a light dinner so members could gather to discuss important national and local issues to prepare for our Annual Meeting. Receiving input at the grassroots level is a critical component to the organization. **Wyn Cain, Carol Gayle, and Elizabeth “Joy” Guscott-Mueller** led the meeting. Joy led the discussion provided by the LWVUS that guides the Program Planning meeting. Carol presented information about Washington, D.C., seeking statehood and a petition was circulated and signed by members present. A report regarding the group’s decisions was sent to LWVUS.

The Annual Meeting on June 13 is our final membership meeting of the fiscal year. **Kitty Cole** has generously offered her home for the event. Following a social hour and delicious dinner, we will have our annual business meeting and thank our retiring directors for their years of service. This meeting culminates our year’s activities as we look forward to the coming year.

## **Voter Service**

Our Voter Service Committee also had a busy year with voter registration, candidate debates, and the “Get Out the Vote” campaign. **Mary Mathews**, chaired the committee with **Beth Berg, Peg Determan, Ann Grant, Robin Huszagh, Laurie Rose, Wyn Cain, and Amy Knutson Strack**. Volunteers assisting the committee included **Sharon Borg, Happie Datt, Lisa Dietrich, Ann Hamlin, Don Pierson, Trude Roselle, Carol Russ, Anne Vanderbilt, and Stephanie Victor**.

Registration is a key focus of the committee, and we provide education, services, and outreach. League members continue to express interest in becoming deputy voter registrars. There were only two training classes this winter, but more will be scheduled later in the year. Many thanks to **Judy Boggess, Cindy Broten, Claire Esker, Chris Moses, Lois Nicol, and Kirsten Stuteville** who signed up this year as deputy registrars. We also are proud of our “Primo Traveling Registrar,” **Ann Grant**, who always carries registration forms with her at all times.

Once again this year the Newcomers’ Club requested the League provide voter registration at their fall luncheon. **Ann Grant** registered several new residents and gave out current voter information while **Wyn Cain** was on hand to answer questions about the League.

For National Voter Registration Day on September 26, we joined hundreds of League affiliates to promote voter registration. Led by **Mary Mathews**, the team of **Bev Adamczyk, Kitty Cole, Happie Datt, Terry Desmond, Claire Esker, Carol Gayle, Ann Grant, Chris Moses, Rita Pickard, Jared Rose, and Laurie Rose** provided contacts, made arrangements, and registered 59 people. We publicized the event widely in local print media, social media, and on flyers distributed in venues throughout the area. The City of Lake Forest and the Village of Lake Bluff passed resolutions in support of the League’s community-wide, voter registration campaigns. **Wyn Cain** accepted the resolution at a meeting in Lake Forest, and **Cindy Morehead** accepted on behalf of the League the Village of Lake Bluff’s Proclamation. Other organizations and entities that joined our efforts, included the Lake Buff Public Library, Lake Forest Library, Dickinson Hall, Lake Forest Academy, Lake Forest College, Lake Forest High School, and Shields Township.

The Voter Service committee also worked on the Get Out The Vote (GOTV) campaign, using Facebook and print campaigns. We also promoted LWVIL’s online voter guide, BallotReady ([www.ballotready.com](http://www.ballotready.com)). LWVIL partnered with The University of Chicago Institute of Politics to make it easy for voters to research candidates and referendums in the state.

This year we worked with three local League chapters (LWV-LF/LB, Highland Park/Highwood, and Deerfield) and the North Shore Unitarian Church (Bannockburn) to host primary debates for Lake County clerk and the U.S. 10th Congressional District. More than 200 people attended the debates, and we received excellent media coverage. Thanks to volunteers **Valerie Krejcie** (moderator), **Beth Berg, Peg**

**Determan, Terry Desmond, Claire Esker, Ann Grant, Ann Hamlin, Robin Huszagh, Jackie Johnson, Kelsey Marx, Lois Nicol, Laurie Rose, Trude Roselle, and Anne Vanderbilt.**

At Lake Forest High School, **Jared Rose** successfully encouraged many students to register and vote this year. Last summer, he met with LFHS administrators to collaborate and allow the League to provide voter registration to students during National Voter Registration Day. In September, he posted flyers around the school and rallied eligible students. In March, Jared and **Kelsey Marx** spearheaded voter registration before the March primary election.

For the second year, LWV-LF/LB members signed up for poll watching in Lake Forest, Lake Bluff, and Knollwood voting sites during the March primary election. **David Mueller** trained LWV-LF/LB volunteers about poll watching roles and responsibilities, as well as common voting issues and problems. Many thanks to our volunteers **Happi Datt, Jean Brown, Elizabeth “Joy” Guscott-Mueller, Carol Gayle, Carol Russ, Lynn Gaffigan, and Sharon Borg.**

## **Program**

Education and advocacy is a vital service of the League. Our Program Committee worked on important public meetings this year, plus interest groups. The committee is led by **Elizabeth “Joy” Guscott-Mueller, Carol Gayle, and Sharon Borg** and the many volunteers who step forward to help with all of the tasks: **Jim Borg, Marge Burda, Happie Datt, Terry Desmond, Ann Grant, Cynthia Morehead, David Mueller, Lois Nicol, Carol Russ, Elizabeth Teich, Marilyn Turchi, and Anne Vanderbilt. Wyn Cain** graciously introduced each event, welcomed guests, and encouraged people to join.

At the City’s request, we cosponsored, “A Fiscal Stress Test: How the State’s Decisions Impact the City and Schools of Lake Forest” with the City of Lake Forest and Lake Forest School Districts 67 and 115 at Gorton Community Center in October. **Elizabeth “Joy” Guscott-Mueller** moderated the forum, which included panelists from the city and schools about impact of the newly passed state budget.

Later in October, our League chapter provided support to “The Future of Rail Freight Traffic” symposium hosted by the City of Lake Forest and the Villages of Bannockburn, Deerfield, Glenview, and Northbrook. The event was held at Trinity International University and brought interested members from many communities. **Carol Russ**, past president of LWV-LF/LB, expertly moderated the event by presenting a wide variety of questions put to the panel by audience members.

Sen. Julie Morrison; John Bouman (Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law); and Sarah Wetmore (Civic Federation of Chicago) were a part of a public forum in October for “Beyond the State Budget Impasse: Impacts and Next Steps” at Gorton Community Center. They discussed the new state budget and its impact on state programs and finances. **Susan Garrett**, chair of the Illinois Campaign for Political Reform, moderated the event. A notable first for our League, Morrison appeared live from Springfield via the Internet because she was called to a veto session. This is a benefit of technology!

A standing-room-only crowd filled the Gorton Center on a wintery January night for a panel discussion, “Making Democracy Work: Gerrymandering and Its Impact on Public Policy.” Panelists Nicholas Stephanopoulos (University of Chicago law); Lori Lightfoot (Mayer Brown); and Rep. Scott Drury presented an engaging program about hyperpartisan gerrymandering and its effect on public policy. The Adlai Stevenson Center on Democracy also cosponsored the event, with Nancy Stevenson opening the event with **Wyn Cain. Elizabeth “Joy” Guscott-Mueller** served as moderator. Many volunteers contributed to the success of the event, including **Sharon Borg, Carol Gayle, Laurie Rose, Tracy Burns, Terry Desmond, Lisa Dietrich, Anne Vanderbilt, Peg Determan, and Judy Armstrong.**

We have a theme this year of overflow crowds, and the May program, “Money and Politics: Its Impact on Gun Safety Policy,” featuring Sen. Dick Durbin, Rep. Brad Schneider, and Lake Forest High School

student Elizabeth Porter was no different! Attendees stood in the hall of Gorton Center to hear our panelists. Given the timing of the “March for Our Lives” movement, Elizabeth’s discussion points resonated with the crowd. Attendees commented that this event gave them “hope for the future.”

In May, Tom Skilling returned from WGN-TV to lead panel discussion, “Developments in Climate Change Science and Policy: Obstacles and Opportunities,” with Mary Gade (Gade Environmental Group, LLC.) and Donald J. Wuebbles, Ph.D. (University of Illinois). Cosponsored with Lake Forest High School, we also introduced a new Environmental Expo this year. Lake Forest High School students and organizations from the area had tabletop displays available before and after the forum. Leading up to the event in April and May, the League collaborated with LFHS and Lake Forest and Lake Bluff Public Libraries to showcase student work about climate change. All-in-all, a great communitywide event!

The Climate Change Interest Group continues to meet on the fourth Thursday of the month at Starbucks on Western Avenue (Lake Forest). It is a very engaged and active group, with **Elizabeth “Joy” Guscott-Mueller**, **Carol Gayle**, and **Sharon Borg** taking turns facilitating meetings about a host of topics. **Ann Grant** and **Lois Nichol** have discussed food scrap composting and textile recycling. Due to **Marge Burda’s** advocacy, the City of Lake Forest published an educational article about the hazards of using coal tar sealants on driveways. That’s action!

The Great Decisions foreign policy discussion group meets throughout the year, led by **Ann Grant**, **Cindy Morehead**, and **Eleanor McMurrin**. Guided by the Great Decisions booklet published by the Foreign Policy Association, they covered a range of subjects— from nuclear security to Russia’s foreign policy to global health. What a terrific way to be informed about the world!

New this year, **Steve Potsic** and **Helen Potsic** launched the Healthcare Interest Group in March. It is off to a great start, with the group delving into a plethora of healthcare topics. Ideas for future meetings include medical care costs; navigating insurance and drug providers; cuts in Medicaid and reproductive healthcare; affordability of nursing home care; availability of mental health services; and single-payer system. Sign up for the e-blast group or watch our website for next meetings!

## **Volunteers Make It Happen!**

Many thanks to our treasurer **Steve Potsic**, who keeps our records and manages the details. **Tom Meskel** leads the very important role of fundraising. **Marge Burda** records the most meticulous minutes in board meetings. **Nicki Snoblin** our web manager did a website updates this year to keep the site looking fresh and easy to use. She also moved a lot of our videos to YouTube. **Carol Russ** writes fabulous e-alerts and we love her imagination to pull together the parades. **Diane and Stan Sanderson** put in long hours and are able to creatively wordsmith our newsletters. **Ann Hamlin** encourages newsletter authors to turn in their contributions on time as our famous “agitator/aggregator.” **Mary Mathews** does extraordinary work on Facebook, with frequent postings that make it a truly social site. **Jane Partridge**, liaison to LWV-Lake County, keeps us informed with the greater activities in the region. The ongoing mentoring by **Ann Grant** is very helpful for our board. And thank you to our nominating committee who recently took a very thoughtful approach to pull together a slate of candidates for our next board of directors. It is not an easy task, but we appreciate how they worked with everyone and then captured the steps.

Without the work of our volunteers, our organization would not be where we are today. **Thank you to each and every person who donates their time and their resources to our chapter.** We are fortunate to have access to first-rate speakers and venues, but it’s our outstanding volunteer force and their passion for democracy that makes it all truly happen. Thank you to all for making this an amazing year as we continue to put our best foot forward in “Making Democracy Work!”

*Respectfully submitted, President Wyn Cain*