

## **LWV-LF/LB Area Board Report for 2015-2016**

This year we certainly learned a lot about our action focus areas. Many new members joined after attending one of these events. But the year started with just fun, marching in the Lake Bluff Fourth of July parade. Our theme was "Our Eyes Are On Your Issues". Carol Russ decorated her convertible with eyelashes on the headlights. We had enthusiastic responses from the parade-watchers, as we did marching in the Lake Forest Day parade. We even won an award. We can tell the community appreciates us!

Liz, Wyn, Mary Mathews, Linda Bartmes and Jeanne Kearby attended the LWVIL State Convention. We learned about using social media to increase league membership. We received petitions and instructions about the Independent Maps amendment, and so armed, we collected over 350 signatures at several Farmers Markets, Lake Forest Day, and other events during the summer. The convention gave us an award for increasing our membership by 16% in 2015-2016!

At our annual meeting at Cindy Morehead's we chose these focus areas: state fiscal policy, gun violence prevention, climate change and health care. In addition we planned to participate in LWVUS studies of the constitutional amendment process and money in politics. A tall order! Since much work remains to be done on all of these issues, they were readopted for 2016-2017. More on that later.

Cleanup of the Waukegan Harbor was the subject of a luncheon and delightful boat tour of the harbor in July. We even measured the chemical composition and the turbidity of the water using equipment actually used by the WG Jackson ship.

The League participated in a sustainability survey which measured the interest of our community in protecting the planet so that it remains livable for future generations. We wrote to the media that we support federal subsidies to premiums for health care coverage under the Affordable Care Act.

We celebrated "10 Fabulous First Ladies" at our holiday luncheon in December. Barry Bradford gave us the history of these women. Froggy's French Cafe gave us a fine lunch. Jane Partridge was given the Carrie Chapman Catt award for leadership and action in promoting the League's mission.

We took a position on the Route 53 extension process. We wrote to the Lake Forest City Council that the public did not have adequate notice of discussion before their vote to support the extension.

Local leaguers helped Greenhouse Scholars by manning a refreshment stand on their bike race in July. Hopefully they raised significant funds for scholarships for needy teens.

Our fall kickoff was a social and program on climate change. The barn at Elawa Farm was the perfect place for a scientist, a moralist, and our own David Mueller to speak about what we can and should do, and how to do it, to slow climate change.

Potbelly gave us an opportunity to raise funds for the League in September. Then in October we were deep into the national study of amending the U.S. Constitution. Fortified with a potluck dinner, we discussed and answered the consensus questions. LWVUS has now combined the local leagues' answers into a new LWVUS position. Possibly this will lead to a change in the Citizens United decision on money in politics.

Money in politics was the next focus. In November we held a forum to learn a legislator's, a LWVIL, and a lobbyist's position on the subject, to educate ourselves on the issue before considering the LWVUS consensus questions. That meeting in January set lofty goals for campaign finance regulation, not including support of economic and corporate interests. It also defined political corruption in three ways. Again, we reported our conclusions to national and a national league position has been established.

In February we planned our program for next year. Like LWVUS, we decided more action on the same issues as last year is needed. Several of us attended the LWVIL issues briefing downtown and learned more about criminal justice.

Later in February we joined with neighboring leagues to hold a debate for candidates for Congress and State's attorney. The audience was large and the debate respectful and substantive.

A teen and young adult mental health program was presented in January by Dr. Mark Reinecke and other representatives of supportive organizations. We learned about the many changes teens go through in adolescence, many necessary but some harmful.

In April Carol and Joy organized a forum on the state fiscal crisis. Ralph Martire presented data which contradicted some myths. Scott Drury and Julie Morrison described their difficulty in getting legislation passed which would fund important programs.

The legislative interviews with Rep. Drury and Sen. Morrison revealed their priorities. Both support increased revenue, gun safety legislation, reducing the prison population, and clean power. On the graduated income tax, their support would depend on the rates established so that total revenue is increased and not just by raising the upper income rates

We are planning a new fund-raising drive for our local league which will sell advertising in our newsletter, membership book and website.

Anne Vanderbilt and Stephanie Victor are presenting the Know You Government awards to middle schoolers at honors assemblies. Stephanie has a daughter in the Deerpath class!

Liz Bradner and Wyn Cain  
Co-presidents