

LWV-LF/LB Board Report for 2016-2017

Since "Making Democracy Work" is the LWVUS motto and its number one action item, and an action item for our League, too, let's see how we did it!

Beginning in early June, out-going Co-president Liz Bradner and newly elected (single!) president Wyn Cain attended the LWVUS convention in Washington D.C. They met the newly elected national president, Chris Carson, as well as delegates from around the country who shared excellent program ideas and opportunities for increasing League membership. These contacts continue as a great source for answers and ideas.

The summer parades were wonderful opportunities to be visible in our communities and to make important statements. Lake Bluff 4th of July Parade League marchers were: Sharon Borg, Carol Russ, Happie Datt, Cindy Morehead and Wyn Cain, who carried signs that read: "Educate and Agitate", "Stop Gun Violence", "Make Democracy Work", "Register to Vote On-Line", and "17 States with New Restrictive Voting Laws." Then Aug 3rd, the League marched in the Lake Forest Day Parade. Anne Vanderbilt, Sharon Borg, Cynthia McKenzie, Happie Datt, and Wyn Cain marched carrying the League banner and signs while Jim Borg drove Steve Sackley's red convertible car decorated with our League logo and sign "Our Eyes Are On Your Issues". We are deeply indebted to Carol Russ for her creativeness.

In between the parades, we took advantage of another training opportunity the League organization provides. The day long Membership Leadership Development (MLD) meeting was held on July 23rd in Aurora. V.P. Membership, Marilyn Turchi, new member, Anne Vanderbilt, and President, Wyn Cain attended. The education continues with monthly conference calls with our MLD Coach, Jan Dorner, past LWVIL president, who shares recommendations and ideas for membership and leadership development.

Moving into fall, our pace picked up. The Membership Kick-off Social was held on Sept 18. Stevie Clark graciously provided her historic home. The Honorable Susan Garrett informally shared her personal experiences in the state legislature and answered all our questions. Light refreshments and plenty of time to chat made for a pleasant afternoon. Some guests were so impressed that they joined the League immediately. Marilyn Turchi, Linda Bartmes, Carol Russ, Sandi Riggs, and Sharon Borg started the year off with a warm and welcoming membership event.

The Membership Committee, led by Marilyn Turchi and Linda Bartmes, worked throughout the year with three more events: the Holiday Luncheon, Program Planning meeting, and finally the Annual Meeting in June. Between these events they also sent out abundant correspondence, updated the database continuously, welcomed new members, prepared the Membership directory, provided address labels for other committees, and performed myriad tasks.

The ever-popular Holiday Luncheon was held on December 2, at Froggy's French Café in Highwood. Attendance was high as everyone had looked forward to excellent bistro food and Barry Bradford's presentation "*Julia Child: Chef or Spy*". Once again Linda's beautiful centerpieces added to the festivity and our bank account! Mary Mathews was presented the 4th annual Carrie Chapman Catt Award for her leadership and continued service to the League. Sharon Borg and Ann Hamlin volunteered in helping everyone enjoy a special time together.

The next membership event was our Program Planning meeting on February 21st at Cindy Morehead's home. After enjoying an excellent assortment of refreshments provided by League Directors, members got down to business. Grassroots input into the "Program" at each level of League is a vital component of the organization. This year we addressed LWVIL's "Program" for 2017-2019. Rosemary Heilemann, LWV-Deefield, led the discussion on LWVIL positions and suggestions for Action Foci. Wyn and Joy Guscott-Mueller followed with discussion for our local 2017-2018 Program. Members reviewed our local positions and went over past Action issues. Their input was provided to the Board which compiled a Proposed Program for the members to vote on at the Annual Meeting.

The Annual Meeting on June 7th is our final membership meeting of the fiscal year. Laurie Rose generously offered her home for the event. After a lively social time and a delicious dinner, we conduct our business meeting

and thank our retiring directors: Terry Desmond, Peg Determan, and Sally Zeit. We will be ready to start off a new year on July 1, 2017!

Our Voter Service Committee also had a busy year -- voter registration, four candidate debates, and a new project, poll watching.

Terry Desmond, V.P. Voter Service, headed up the committee of Beth Berg, Wyn Cain, Peg Determan, Ann Grant, Robin Huszagh, Mary Mathews, and Laurie Rose. Volunteers assisting the committee included Sharon Borg, Beth Coughlin, Happie Datt, Lisa Dietrich, Ann Hamlin, Don Pierson, Trude Roselle, Carol Russ, Jan Schnobrich, Anne Vanderbilt, and Stephanie Victor.

The committee started with voter registration. Once again, the Newcomers' Club requested the League provide voter registration at their fall luncheon. On September 15th at Exmoor Country Club, Ann Grant registered several new residents and gave out current voter information. Wyn Cain was on hand to answer any questions about the League.

This year our League chapter joined with over 350 other League affiliates to participate in the National Voter Registration Day on Sept. 27th. LWV-LF/LB publicized in print media and on Facebook information about the voter registration drive and how to register. The League of Women Voters has been the largest on-the-ground participant in National Voter Registration Day for the last five years running. We were happy to be a part of this successful endeavor.

For months, the committee had been planning the candidate debates. On Oct. 13th, the Candidate Debates for Lake County Offices were held at the Lake Bluff Recreation Center. Candidates for Lake County Coroner, Circuit Court Clerk, Recorder of Deeds, State's Attorney and County Board District #13 participated. The debates were informative with a couple of heated moments.

As the congressional and state legislative districts served four local League areas, Terry Desmond formed a broader committee to include members from LWV-Deerfield, Highland Park/Highwood, and Glenview/Glencoe. On Oct. 16, the debate for the 10th Congressional District with U.S. Rep. Robert Dold, R-Kenilworth, and former Congressman Brad Schneider, D-Deerfield was held. The event also included debates for incumbents State Senator Julie Morrison and State Representative Scott Drury. Lake Forest High School Auditorium provided the necessary space for the over 300 people attending. The Union League Club of Chicago co-sponsored again this year. We are very grateful for Kathy O'Hara arranging for the debates to be held at the High School, and to Jeanne Kearby for moderating.

In the Spring, another set of debates was held. On Sunday, March 12, the hotly contested High School District 115 race required a large venue. The Lake Forest High School again provided the necessary space for the crowd of almost 300 residents. Seven candidates for the High School Board participated. Five candidates for Elementary School District #67, and the two candidates running for Lake Forest Ward 2 also debated. They all offered voters the opportunity to learn the candidates' views on a variety of questions.

On Sunday, March 19th the final set of debates was held at the Lake Bluff Recreation Center. Candidates for the three contested races of Lake Bluff Trustee, Lake Bluff Clerk, and Shields Township Supervisor presented their reasons why residents should vote for them. Over 50 Lake Bluff and Knollwood residents attended.

New this year was the training of League members to be poll watchers on April 4th election day. Members David Mueller and Joy Guscott-Mueller ably trained to ensure proper procedures were followed at the polling places. Volunteer poll watchers included Wyn Cain, Happie Datt, Ann Grant, Ann Hamlin, Lyn Gaffigan, Edie Rasmussen Ahern, Linda Hinde, Steve Potsic, Anne Sorensen, Joy Guscott-Mueller, David Mueller, Bev Nelson, Sophie Twichell, Jean Brown, Carol Russ, Carol Gayle, and Peg Determan. They covered twenty-two precincts in the Lake Forest Lake Bluff area.

One of the most vital services the League offers is education and advocacy. Our Program Committee has been very successful in carrying out these goals, with three important public meetings and an ongoing discussion group. Kudos to our Co-Vice Presidents of Program: Joy Guscott-Mueller, Carol Gayle, and Sharon Borg and the

many volunteers who have stepped forward to help in carrying out the many tasks associated with these programs: Linda Bartmes, Beth Berg, Marge Burda, Happie Datt, Judy Grisamore, Robin Huszagh, Jillian Jarvinen, Melea Lusk, Sue Minorini, Lois Nicol, Eve Rochelemagne, Carol Russ, Marilyn Turchi, and Anne Vanderbilt, among others.

The Climate Change Interest Group meets monthly (Oct 25, Nov. 10, Jan. 26, Feb. 23, Mar. 23 and Apr. 20) at LF Starbucks on Western Ave. Sharon Borg has organized the meetings, while Joy Guscott-Mueller and David Mueller have led the discussion about legislation regarding climate change. Sharon and Marge Burda showed their concern for the climate by marching in the Climate March in Chicago. This continues to be an active group.

On Nov. 12th, "*Climate Change, Post-Election Analysis: The Future of Climate Change Strategy in a New Administration*" was held in the Stuart Community room at the Gorton Community Center in Lake Forest. Speakers, Tom Skilling, WGN-TV Meteorologist, Douglas Sisterson, Research Meteorologist at Argonne National Laboratory and Mary Gade of Gade Environmental Group, LLC offered different kinds of expertise in climate change issues and what we might expect of the new administration in the way of climate change. This was a resounding success with 176 attendees from far and wide including many students attending.

On April 10th, the fiscal policy program "*Understanding the Ongoing Budget Impasse: Pathways to Resolution*" was presented at Gorton. State Representative for the 58th District, Scott Drury and Ralph Martire, Executive Director for the bipartisan Center for Tax and Budget Accountability, and moderator Susan Garrett, Chairman of the Board of Directors for the Il. Campaign for Political Reform were the speakers. Both men are excellent communicators, and Susan ably drew out some of their slight differences of opinion. The League continues to push for tax reform and fiscal responsibility. It is a partner in the Responsible Budget Coalition with the Center for Tax and Budget Accountability and many other nonprofit organizations.

On May 20, 2017 from 3:00p.m.- 5:00 p.m. in the Auditorium of Gorton Community Center, is the final program for the year. "*Your Child's Health: The Impact of Climate Change, Health Care and Gun Safety*" is presented by Anne Edwards, MD, FAAP, from the American Academy of Pediatrics. The "Impacts" stressed current scientific findings, how they inform public policy, and how they impact on the health and development of children. Moderator is our League Treasurer Steven R. Potsic, MD, MPH, FACPM, Regional Health Administrator, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Additional education programs were planned by Jean Brown, Hot Topics Director, and carried out with the help of the Program Committee: Carol, Sharon, and Joy. "Hot Topics" may cover an issue that has some immediate appeal, and may or may not be supported by a League position.

On January 17th the "Hot Topic" entitled "*Iran Nuclear Agreement*" was a discussion between Dr. Ahmad Sadri, Gorter Professor of World Islamic Studies and Sociology at Lake Forest College, and Jerome McDonnell, Host of WBEZ's Worldview noontime radio program. Dr. Sadri was able to personalize this controversial subject while Mr. McDonnell subtly expanded the discourse. The audience appreciated the presentation. Lake Forest College co-sponsored the event, and many faculty members attended.

After years of waiting, Jean Brown, announced the visit of Trevor Potter, President of the Campaign Legal Center to discuss his work to protect our democracy. The Adlai Stevenson Center of Democracy in Mettawa and Lake Forest College co-sponsored "*Money in Politics: Democracy and Governance in Today's America*" with the League on May 11th at the Lily Reid Holt Chapel, Lake Forest College. Trevor Potter previously spoke at the LWVUS convention in 2012. He is best known for being Stephen Colbert's Super PAC lawyer and his many appearances on The Colbert Report television show. Potter talked about the corrupting influence of money in politics, a long-standing League issue.

But that's not all we did!! There were other activities.

On July 27, the Lake Forest-Lake Bluff Chamber of Commerce held its "*Summer Bash: A Celebration of Community*" highlighting local non-profits of which the League was one. Wyn Cain and Mary Mathews represented the league at this outreach event, and promoted the League and its activities.

LWVIL held its annual fundraiser, State of State Luncheon, on Sept. 21 at the Union League of Chicago. The topic was "*Civics in the Schools*" with Keynote Speaker Cheryl Corley, a National Public Radio journalist. Sharon Borg, Wyn Cain, Abbie Fassnacht, and Jo-An Sabonjian were among the hundreds that attended.

The League pursued two advocacy efforts this year. On Oct 12, Wyn, as spokesperson, addressed the Lake Forest City Council stating that LWV-LF/LB strongly supports the Lake Forest Sustainability Plan that is now included in the City's Comprehensive Plan. The League would like to actively promote some of the goals in the Plan.

A few months later in January, 2017 the League submitted written comments to the Federal Railroad Administration regarding the proposed Chicago-Milwaukee Amtrak Hiawatha Service Proposal. League members had attended public meetings in Lake Forest and Glenview. David Mueller, Mary Mathews, and Steven Potsic provided the final wording for the official comment. We are waiting for a response from the Administration.

Advocacy also was a factor in the Women's Marches. Many of our members stood for the League and participated in the Women's March in Washington DC and the Women's March in Chicago.

During February and March Legislative Interviews were held with IL State Senator Julie Morrison and IL State Representative Scott Drury. League members, Laurie Rose, Beth Berg, Sharon, Borg, Terry Desmond, Marilyn Turchi, and Wyn Cain had the opportunity to meet and question the legislators on a variety of issues in the local office of the legislator.

A fun activity was provided by Happie Datt. On Jan 4th, Happie led a group to the Field Museum of Natural History to learn about the Terracotta Warriors exhibit. Happie, who is a docent at the museum, gave in her home a power-point presentation of the 170 objects, before the group went to see the exhibit. We look forward to other excursions as a way for our members to be engaged and enjoy Chicago attractions.

And we have so much going on behind the scenes.

We would be lost without the help of so many volunteers. Our treasurer Steve Potsic guides our spending and keeps us in the black. Tom Meskel leads the very important role of fundraising. Peg Determan and Marge Burda captured our decisions in the minutes. Nicki Snoblin our webmaster and tech expert. Carol Russ for her fabulous monthly e-alerts and imagination leadership with the parades. Diane and Stan Sanderson work long hours to get the newsletters out. Ann Hamlin pulls together the articles. Mary Mathews for her posting League advocacy efforts on Facebook. Sally Zeit, liaison to LWV-Lake County and David Mueller, liaison to LWV Lake Michigan Region, have kept us up to date on what our sister Leagues are doing. The on-going mentoring by Ann Grant, and long distance support from Liz Bradner who stays in touch with advice and experience. The nominating committee Cindy Morehead, Linda Bartmes, Kathleen Conlon-Wasik, Jane Partridge, Marilyn Turchi who have made it possible to continue our work.

Thanks to all! This concludes our very successful year in "Making Democracy Work".

Respectfully submitted,
Wyn Cain, President