



# LEAGUE LINES

APRIL 2013

## League of Women Voters of the Lake Forest/Lake Bluff Area

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## Obamacare, Just the Facts!

Lake Forest · April 22, 2013

Now that Obamacare is being implemented and changing our healthcare system, we wonder how it will affect us and our families. On Monday, April 22, 7:00 p.m., at Lake Forest Recreation Center



Julie Hamos

(CROYA Auditorium), the League is hosting a panel discussion with two outstanding speakers. They will give us just the facts: no sell job, no personal interpretations. Julie Hamos, Director of the Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services, and Dr. Steven

Potsic, public health consultant, will explain many of the provisions and impacts. There will be time for questions after their presentations.

We have already started getting questions. At-

tend the program and get your questions answered. Here are some examples: "My child is 27 and unemployed; how can he get coverage? I lost my job and COBRA is too expensive; what are my options? I'm healthy; I don't want to waste my money paying for expensive health insurance; how much is my fine? I have health insurance through my employer; how will that change? I have a small business; what do I have to do?"



Dr. Stephen Potsic

Dr. Steven Potsic is a member of our League and has been active on the Gun Sense committee and helped with the "Nutritious or Malicious?" program. He has a long distinguished career in health care. Dr. Potsic was the Principal US Public Health Service official

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## Opening Doors - Wrongful Convictions of Women

"Opening Doors", a program on wrongful convictions of women, will be presented on Sunday, April 28th at 3:30 p.m. in the Lily Reid Holt Memorial Chapel, Lake Forest College, 555 N. Sheridan Road, Lake Forest.

Women fighting wrongful convictions face special challenges. Natural or accidental deaths can be mistaken for murder, and indeed, according to the National Registry of Exonerations, one half of female exonerees were convicted for what turned out to be no crime at all. You will learn about the newly

formed Women's Project of the Center on Wrongful Convictions at Northwestern University, led by Karen L. Daniel and Judy Royal, co-directors, and their colleague, Erin K. Topp. The program is sponsored by League of Women Voters - Lake County, AAUW, Lake County Bar Association, and Lake Forest College - Ethics Center. LWV-LFLB member and law professor Melanie Rummel will facilitate the program. Reception follows.



Karen L. Daniel (above), Judy Royal and Erin Topp will present in Lake Forest on April 28.



Erin K. Topp



Judy Royal

—by Linda Bartmes

## Letter from the Co-Presidents

Dear Leaguers,

LWVIL will celebrate the 100th anniversary (June 26, 1913) of Illinois women getting the franchise in Presidential elections. The story of suffrage for Illinois women is unique and important in the nation's history:

- Illinois was the first state east of the Mississippi to expand the vote to women;
- Illinois was a more populous state than any previous state to give women the vote; and,
- Because it was neither prohibited in the US or Illinois state constitutions, Illinois women were able to vote for Presidential electors, shifting the balance of power in national elections. This propelled the national suffrage movement into its final phase, leading to the 19th amendment in 1919.

LWVIL in conjunction with the Union League Club of Chicago will celebrate our 100th anniversary in June. Watch for further details. It will be a big celebration for all of us.

Often we take our voting rights for granted, but thanks to the suffragettes and Carrie Chapman Catt and the early 20th century women of Illinois, we have been able to vote for 100 years!

However, we must not shirk our responsibilities that come with the vote. Among the issues we need to understand are the state's fiscal policies and the possibility of a graduated rate income tax (GRIT), the suppression of the Voting Rights Act, the many benefits for women in the Affordable Care Act (ACA), and what legislation should be passed for gun control or gun responsibility. These were the topics at the LWVIL Issues Briefing in February.

The state of Illinois is broke and the flat tax, of 3.25% in 2015, is far below the needs of the state. The top 1% of taxpayers nationally have had an increase in income on average of 11.2% during the recession and are not paying their fair share. Tax money

(91%) goes to: 1) education, 2) healthcare, 3) human services, and 4) public safety. However, the state pays only 27.6% for education whereas the national average is 46.7%. The local share average is 60.5%, whereas the national local education funding average is 43.7%. A graduated rate income tax would require a constitutional amendment and 60% support. Costs have increased, but the income tax has remained at 2% - 3.25% for over forty years.

Our local agenda has been full. A number of interest group meetings - specifically about gun sense and healthcare have guided our action on these two topics.

The Gun Sense committee met several times and has some recommendations:

- 1) Universal background checks;
- 2) Eliminate straw sales (where a person buys a gun and sells or gives to someone else with no background check on the second party);
- 3) Liability Insurance for every gun owner;
- 4) Ban on assault weapons; and
- 5) Ban on large magazines over 10 rounds

I heard a hunter who was a member of the NRA say that any hunter who needs an assault weapon to kill a deer is not a sportsman.

I urge you to write all of your state and federal legislators: State Representative Scott Drury, State Senator Julie Morrison, Congressman Brad Schneider, Senator Dick Durbin, and Senator Mark Kirk. A handwritten letter or a phone call would be best.

In February, we held both a public program and a social/business meeting. Our program "Nutritious or Malicious?" was very well received. Bill Kurtis gave us the history of how agricultural changes have impacted our food supply, while Dr. Ruchi Gupta, an



allergy specialist at Northwestern University and Lurie Children's Hospital, talked about the increase in food allergies. A few days later we enjoyed our annual Valentine's Day Tea/Program Planning meeting which generated many discussions over delightful delicacies of scones, cookies, and chocolate cake.

In March we held two well-attended candidate debates covering some contentious races. The election was April 9. We hope you were informed about the candidates and voted.

We're planning a program on April 22 to explain the Affordable Care Act, and what it means for us as individuals. Watch for details. Also, there may be an interest group meeting focused on Campaign Finance.

Mark your calendars for our Annual Meeting at Kitty Cole's house on June 4th for a light dinner at 6:00.

We are looking ahead to June 9 and our state convention in Bloomington/Normal. Going to state and national conventions help show the scope of what we do.

I invite you to become involved in any way you can, for there is so much to educate ourselves and act upon for good public policy at both the federal and state governments.

We're hopeful that "Spring is springing"!

—Jane and Mary

## A Conclave of Voters

Although we didn't get the attention the election in Rome garnered, we did attract many voters who wanted to learn more about our local candidates. The venue was not the Sistine Chapel but the Lake Bluff Recreational Center and the Lake Forest Library. Even raindrops and patches of ice didn't deter the candidates, moderators, volunteers and local residents.



On March 3 we listened to Lake Bluff Village Board, Library Board and District 65 School Board candidates, and on March 10 Lake Forest District 67 School Board, Lake Forest High School



115 and Shields Township candidates shared their views and answered questions.

A total of 43 candidates were contacted by committee members Liz Bradner, Peg Determan, Mary Mathews and Ann Grant and all but five participated. Three moderators led the way and twelve volunteers served as greeters, timers, question sorters, and runners. Nametags, tent cards and wa-



ter were also provided by League members. Cheers to the conclave who served: Linda Bartmes, Liz Bradner, Mary Jane Brady, Peg Determan, Lisa Dietrich, Mary Mathews, Jane Partridge, Trude Roselle, Janice Schnobrich, Marilyn Shineflug, and Alice Sievert. And a big thank-you to the moderators Melanie Rummel, Paula Lawson and Kathy Tate-Bradish. So...bring on the voters on April 9 and watch for the white smoke!

—Ann Grant

## Report from Gun Sense Committee

The gun sense committee first met on December 28, soon after, and in response to, the Newtown shootings. Since then our efforts have been part of a major national effort to pass legislation to curb gun violence. Our goals were focused on bans on assault weapons and on high capacity magazines. Though we knew that universal background checks, access to mental health records, and measures to combat gun trafficking would also reduce gun violence, we hoped that a focused effort would be most successful in the Congress and Illinois legislature.

We drafted a letter, signed by our local president, to local newspapers and state and national legislators, urging the bans on assault weapons and high capacity magazines. We met with Congressman Schneider who supported the bans but provided little hope that they would

pass the Congress. Senator Durbin also supports gun sense. We are not sure about Senator Kirk. Our letter was



offered by LWVIL to other Leagues in the state, hoping that downstate congressmen would support the bans. Our national League lobbied Congress

for more than just the bans. We urged our committee to write and call our legislators urging them to promote the bans with their colleagues.

Legislation implementing the bans will be offered by California Senator Feinstein as an amendment to a bill on gun trafficking and possibly universal background checks. The Senate majority leader sees only 40 votes for an assault weapons ban, in spite of 57% public support. This is because gun rights voters vote on this issue alone, whereas gun control voters vote for candidates who support their many issues.

Future action should probably concentrate on persuading Senator Kirk, who so far only publicly supports gun trafficking proposals.

—Liz Bradner

*What, exactly, is a "well regulated militia?"*

## A Field Trip to the Field Museum Jan 8, 2013

Field trips are unforgettable experiences engendering a sense of community! Chicago's numerous museums, events and ethnic neighborhoods right at our doorstep offer opportunities to enrich and engage with life in so many ways. Put the two together and you have a winning combination.

On January 8, League members took a field trip to the Field Museum to learn about India's Royal Courts. Before walking into the exhibit, we learned a little bit about the history of India's kings spanning 400 centuries by our docent, Happie Datt, in a classroom using a combination of slides and lecture format followed by a Q&A.



For many, the word Maharaja conjures up images of turbaned kings sitting on golden thrones or riding jewel-encrusted elephants! Though indubitably true, we learned of the complex roles they played in society, especially in a period of political and social upheaval and eventually giving us the modern India. Learning the history of the people is to understand the people.

Shared experiences such as these, not only bring a sense of community and cement multi-dimensional relationships, but feed into our mission of informed and active participation of citizens in government in the area of Foreign Policy.

—Happie Datt

## Valentine's Tea / Program Planning

Maybe it was the sugar in the chocolate cake or other delicacies, or perhaps the warm welcome from our hostess Carol Russ, but discussion certainly flowed easily around her living room.

Carol's house was filled with people eager to confer about both our local and state positions. Many issues generated lively and interesting discussions. There are so many areas that need attention; it is difficult to focus on a few where we can make

an impact. Now the Board will need to suggest a plan to the membership for next year's Program. Be ready to vote at the annual meeting on June 4th! Are

there some advocacy or education issues you would like to volunteer some time to work on next year? Be sure to let Mary know!



## Obamacare

—(Continued from page 1)

in Region V (Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio and Wisconsin), represented the Assistant Secretary for Health and the Surgeon General on matters of health and science, was in charge of the federal public health programs including emergency planning, response and bio-terrorism, and had a top-level security clearance.

Dr. Potsic is a licensed physician with a Master's Degree from the University of Michigan in Maternal and Child Health and Epidemiology, is clinically trained in pediatrics, and is Board Certified in

Preventive Medicine. He has had academic appointments at the University of Michigan, Columbia University in New York, the University of Illinois, and the University of Kansas. He has practiced medicine in Michigan, New York, and Kansas as well as in Illinois.

Julie Hamos was appointed Director of the Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services in April 2010. HFS is the largest state agency and responsible for the Medicaid Program and Child Support Services. It has a staff of 2400 and a budget of \$17.7 billion.

In December 2012, Ms. Hamos received the "Excellence in Public Service Award" by Motorola Solutions Foundation and the Civic Federation. In Janu-

ary 2013, Hamos was named one of the "People to Watch" by the Chicago Tribune Business Section.

Prior to her appointment, Julie Hamos was State Representative of the 18th District for over 11 years. She has been named "Top Legislator" by over 50 organizations and was named "25 Women to Watch" by Crain's Chicago Business in 2007.

The Lake Forest Recreation Center is located at 400 Hastings Rd., Lake Forest (south of Deerpath, just west of Greenbay, and east of Deer Path Middle School). The CROYA entrance is on the north side of the Recreation Center.

## Legislative Interviews

Read all about them!

Recently, League members interviewed our new legislators: Congressman Brad Schneider, State Senator Julie Morrison, and State Representative Scott Drury.

A couple of members from each of

the four local leagues of Lake Forest/Lake Bluff, Highland Park/Highwood, Deerfield, and Glencoe attended the meetings and took notes. These scheduled appointments are a valuable help for LWVIL and its advocacy work.

Members felt the group discussions were meaningful experiences and would recommend others take advantage of the opportunity the next time. Please see the reports on our website [www.lwv-lflb.org](http://www.lwv-lflb.org), under the library tab.



**Kathleen Conlon-Wasik (standing, far left); Senator Julie Morrison (standing, 2nd from left); Lori Reszutek (seated, center); along with members from other leagues**



**Stephanie Victor (far left); Representative Scott Drury (center); Nicki Snoblin (back row, far right); Jane Partridge (front row, far right); with members of other leagues**



**Liz Bradner (far left); U. S. Congressman Brad Schneider (center); with members of other leagues**

## Illinois Needs a Fair and Graduated Income Tax

**FACT: Illinois has an unfair, inefficient, and inadequate income tax:**

The current revenue system is unfair as it does not account for a person's ability to pay which results in an undue burden on middle and low income families to fund the basic necessities of our state;

Under our "flat tax system" the wealthiest have an overall tax responsibility which is 2-3 times less than the poorest Illinoisans;



Our current flat income tax is inefficient and broken because it is compounding our structural budget deficit; or simply put, the state cannot raise the revenue it needs under its current tax system to

meet the most basic and core services, education, public safety, health care, and human services. Even after all the cuts, we will continue to see yearly deficits;

We have cut school programs, laid off firefighters, cut funding for human services, and we are slashing healthcare for low-income seniors and children.

**FACT: A fair and graduated tax accounts for a person's ability to pay while helping restore stability to our state's budget:**

Establishing a graduated income tax in Illinois means we can provide services we need, reduce the state's debt and grow our economy;

34 out of the 41 states with an income tax have a graduated rate income tax;

The graduated tax could raise \$2.4

billion in new revenue while cutting taxes for up to 94% of Illinois.

**FACT: Illinois voters strongly support tax fairness:**

According to a statewide poll in the fall of 2011, conducted by Harstad Strategic Research, 73% of Illinois voters prefer the graduated tax concept versus only 18% who would prefer more cuts.

**Enacting a fair tax is a two-step process:**

1. By May 2014, three-fifths of lawmakers must vote to allow a ballot question in November 2014.
2. The citizens of Illinois will then vote to approve the question and enact a fair and graduated tax.

## February Program Report

New developments in agricultural biotechnology have raised both expectations and concerns, leading to the 2012 LWVUS Convention delegates to authorize a two-year study to update the League's agricultural position. The "Nutritious or Malicious?" program on February 10 at Gorton Community Center, co-sponsored with Lake Forest Open Lands Association kick-started this conversation at the local level. A big thanks to the students from Lake Forest High School, who came to help in unprecedented numbers on a Sunday afternoon, also speaks to the importance of starting a conversation on the topic within the community!

Teamwork and initiative by members led to a very successful event! The minimal charge of \$10 for non-members and \$5 for members to cover our expenses was a first for our local League which not only enabled us to rent the large Gorton Auditorium with a capa-

city for 300+ people, but allowed us to hire audio-visual consultants to manage the sophisticated equipment with the video presentation by our speaker. Payment via Paypal streamlined the process prior to and on the day of program, and good weather helped boost the attendance to fill the auditorium.



Another first for the League was to permit other organizations, to setup their materials on tables outside the auditorium. The Board determined this was not an endorsement of their messages and considered 'vendors' of their own products.

Melanie Rummel, LWVLF/LB moderator, summarized the regulatory background, pointing out that with three regulatory agencies with tangential missions: EPA, USDA's APHIS, and FDA have led to a patchwork of regulations. Bill Kurtis, journalist, anchor of WBBM News Channel and owner-businessman of TallGrass Beef, a livestock farm in his home state of Kansas focused at a high level on the health of Americans and the relationship to changes in our food chain, post World War II. He described some of the effects of the US Farm policy, from the quadrupling of the yield per acre of corn and the changes in livestock farming to meet the needs of the fast food industry. Dr Ruchi Gupta's research on growing food allergies led to a lively Q&A session at the end. The program was taped and aired by LFTV and is available.

—Happie Datt

## New Members, Annual Meeting, Moderator Training

**Annual Meeting:** Tuesday, June 4th, 6:00 p.m. Kitty Cole has offered to host. Sip some wine (or other beverage), enjoy dinner, and be ready to vote. It will be a great evening.

**Welcome new members:** Sue and Lloyd Hood, Kate Jackson, Anne Whipple, and Wyn Cain!

**Moderator Training:** May 18, 10 to 2

(Lunch included). Chicago LWVIL office. Trainer: Robin Labeledz. RSVP by May 11th to [voterservice@lwvill.org](mailto:voterservice@lwvill.org). A minimum of 10 participants required.

## LWVUS Highlights

LWVUS has been very busy since the start of the new year. The League is concerned about two cases before the Supreme Court and has submitted



**President Elisabeth MacNamara at the Voting Rights Rally in Washington, D.C.**

Amicus briefs in support of both: the National Voter Registration Act (also known as motor voter) and the Voting Rights Act of 1965. LWVUS President Elisabeth MacNamara and other League

members spoke at a rally on the steps of the Supreme Court as the Court heard oral arguments regarding the constitutionality of the Voting Rights Act.

The concern over climate change has been another hot topic. League members from all over the county joined with hundreds of organizations for the "Forward on Climate" rally on the National Mall in Washington DC. League recently sent out an "Action



Alert" asking members to tell their senators to reject in the proposed federal budget any bad environmental amendments that could damage our climate or harm public health. Gun Safety has drawn a lot of attention, at every level. LWVUS sent letters to both the House and Senate asking for common sense gun legislation. An "Action Alert" asked members to contact their senators to pass sensible gun legislation. The League is following this issue closely. See [www.LWV.org](http://www.LWV.org) for more information.

## LWVIL Highlights

Likewise, LWVIL has been busy. It adopted an Illinois Pension Reform position based on the study in which



**The Issues briefing was packed. Four LWV LF/LB members attended.**

our League participated. In February, it hosted the popular yearly Issues Briefing. Gun safety, challenges to women's healthcare, graduated rate income tax, and climate change in the Midwest were some of the subjects receiving attention.

Currently, LWVIL is planning the June bi-annual convention in Bloomington-Normal. The state League has sent out a number of "Time for Action" alerts supporting gun violence prevention, requesting a fracking moratorium, and supporting



**Brigid Leahy, Healthcare Issues Briefing Workshop**

Medicaid expansion. See [www.LWVIL.org](http://www.LWVIL.org) for more information.

## LWV-Lake County Highlights

LWV-Lake County hosted five candidate debates for the Consolidated Election in April. Other requests were received but declined due to time commitments. The League also has been researching gun data and the property

assessment process. LWV-LC directors observe and report on Lake County Board meetings and has active criminal justice and environmental committees. The Criminal Justice committee has planned a program "Opening Doors -

Wrongful Convictions of Women". See the article in this newsletter for more information. Also, LWV-LC will be working in coalition with numerous organizations to tackle pollution caused by a coal burning plant in Waukegan.

*Like us on Facebook!*

## League of Women Voters of the Lake Forest/Lake Bluff Area

P.O. Box 645  
Lake Forest, IL 60045

[www.LWV-LFLB.org](http://www.LWV-LFLB.org)  
... check it often!



## Calendar

**Monday, April 22, 7 P.M.**

Obamacare Program  
Lake Forest Recreation Center  
(see article in this newsletter)

**Sunday, April 28, 3:30 P.M.**

Opening Doors - Wrongful Convictions  
Lake Forest College

**Saturday, May 18, 10 A.M. to 2 P.M.**

Chicago LWVIL office

**Tuesday, June 4, 6 P.M.**

LWV LF/LB Annual Meeting  
Kitty Cole's home

**June 7 — 9**

LWVIL Convention  
Bloomington-Normal

"The League of Women Voters of the United States supports equal rights for all under state and federal law. The LWVUS supports legislation to equalize the legal rights, obligations, and benefits available to same-gender couples with those available to heterosexual couples. LWVUS supports legislation to permit same-gender couples to marry under civil law. The League believes that the civil status of marriage is already clearly distinguished from the religious institution of marriage and that religious rights will be preserved."

### League of Women Voters of the Lake Forest/Lake Bluff Area Board of Directors

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Jane Partridge	Co-President
Mary Mathews	Co-President
Ann Grant	Vice President, Voter Service
M. J. Brady	Vice President, Voter Service
Cindy Morehead	Secretary
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Stephanie Victor	Voter Registration
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