



# The Chicago Voter

League of Women Voters of Chicago  
Website - [www.LWVChicago.org](http://www.LWVChicago.org)

April 2011  
Vol. 61 No. 9



<p>Dates To Remember</p> <p>Meetings held at the League Office Unless otherwise Noted</p> <p>Monday, April 4 Social Policy Committee 10:00 am – noon</p> <p>Executive Committee Call of the co-pres.</p> <p>Monday, April 11 Board Meeting 5:45 pm</p> <p>Wednesday, April 13 SOC meeting 10:00 am – noon</p> <p>Saturday, April 16 Briefing All member meeting Social Policy 10:00 am - noon</p> <p><b>Friday, April 29</b> <b>LWVIL</b> <b>State of the State</b> <b>Lunch</b> <b>Noon</b> <b>Union League Club</b> <b>65 W. Jackson Blvd.</b></p> <p><b>SAVE THE DATE!</b> <b>Saturday, May 7</b> <b>All Member meeting</b> <b>Education</b></p> <p><b>Any other meetings</b> <b>Call the League</b> <b>Office</b> <b>312-939-5935 x28</b></p>	<p><b>CO-PRESIDENT’S COLUMN</b></p> <p><b>April! Spring! Longer days! New growth! Perennials reappearing! Renewal!</b></p> <p>Particular thanks are due to the SOC committee whose members worked long and hard to organize the State of the City® luncheon.</p> <p>In this issue of the <b>Voter</b> you will read several perennial appeals for renewal. At our Annual Meeting on June 18, we will elect officers and board members. The nominating committee is soliciting nominations for the offices of the treasurer and secretary. These officers are essential to maintaining our organization. Our long serving treasurer, Rochelle Riffer and secretary, Norma Braude, have declined to continue to serve as board members. In the March issue of the <b>Voter</b> their jobs were described.</p> <p>As a whole, board responsibilities include both administrative and program activities. Administrative activities cover membership (recruiting members and maintaining member records), fund raising (development and State of the City®) and communication with our members (<b>The Voter</b> and electronic media) and Voter Service. Board members with an “item” (League-speak for program responsibility) develop knowledge of League positions on the program item and follow legislation and funding proposals that affect implementation of the League positions. Both LWVUS and LWVIL regularly distribute information about pending bills, item chairs write testimony and letters (signed by the co-presidents) on behalf of LWV Chicago. There are openings for both administration and program responsibilities.</p> <p>Do not be deterred. When I was first invited to assume responsibility for an item, I said, “But I know nothing about.....” and the president responded, “There are meetings morning, afternoon and some in the evening. You will learn.” I am not implying that anyone new to a program must commit morning, noon and night of every weekday and every Saturday morning to meetings. The League works in coalition with organizations that share our program goals and these relationships flatten the learning curve. Board members support one another.</p> <p>Off board program chairs (or co-chairs) support League activities. Program items often cover several aspects of an issue. For example: education includes curriculum standards, equity and funding; Social policy includes job training, housing and other poverty issues. If you are interested in an area of League program and would like to learn more about it, consider working off-board with the item chair. Let the nominating committee know of your interest. Current issues for action are education, social policy, redistricting and health care.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Margaret</i></p>
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## **MEETING ON SOCIAL POLICY APRIL 16, 2011, 10:00 AM - NOON**

This all member meeting/briefing session is on the proposed Preservation, Enhancement, and Transformation of Rental Assistance Act of 2010/2011 (PETRA) initiative. This meeting will feature a panel with Herman Bonner, President National Association of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Tenants, DeAngelo Bester, director of National Peoples Action's Housing Justice Campaign and our own LWVChicago member, Herb Ziegeldorf. This topic will be the discussion issue at the May Unit Meetings.

Briefly, *Shelterforce Magazine* in its Summer 2010 edition stated that "HUD's PETRA initiative, first proposed in February 2010, seeks to help federal housing programs leverage other, mostly private, capital by converting public housing and existing HUD-assisted housing to a new form of project-based (HUD assistance stays with private owner) contract. In the first year, HUD hopes this would leverage \$7 billion, and eventually as much as \$25 billion. PETRA would also consolidate various rental assistance programs and waiting lists and encourage regional mobility for voucher holders."

All this is necessary because the 1.2 million units of remaining public housing need an estimated \$30 billion in rehab and repairs because, according to National Peoples Action, the Federal Government has never provided sufficient funding for property maintenance and improvement.

The National Housing Trust Fund was created in July 2008 as part of the Housing and Economic Recovery Act and was to be funded by a fractional addition to Fannie Mae premiums. Unfortunately, the housing market collapsed and the Trust Fund has been searching for a funding mechanism ever since. On March 15, subcommittees in both houses discussed funding and split along partisan lines. Democrats argued that it uniquely addresses the rental housing needs of very low-income Americans, while Republicans contended that it was redundant with HUD'S HOME housing subsidy program. The National Housing Trust Fund remains unfunded.

This is more than a regular briefing on an important issue. Please consider coming, please let [preslwvchicago@gmail.com](mailto:preslwvchicago@gmail.com) or the office, 312-939-5935 x28 know by Thursday, April 14, 2011 so that the building access list may be prepared.

*Herb Ziegeldorf*

## **NOMINATING COMMITTEE**

The Nominating Committee is requesting that you submit the Nomination form by April 11, 2011. The committee needs time to provide a slate for the annual meeting. We need a secretary to record all member meetings and a treasurer who is familiar with organizational financial practices. We need board members (at least four of them) and we could use off-board program chairs or co-chairs. Please nominate someone for these positions or nominate yourself. WE NEED YOU! A copy of the form is the last page of this **Voter**.

## **FOREIGN VISITORS**

From time to time, World Chicago, formerly International Visitor's Center of Chicago, invites us to meet with women and men who are visiting the US under the auspices of the Department of State. The purpose is to discuss voting and election-related laws and activities, how the League is involved in these processes and what else the League does. A few weeks ago we met with women from central and south Asian countries. One hundred women, divided into smaller groups, visited several American cities and reunited in San Francisco to discuss their impressions. What they all liked was a short video presentation about the history of women's suffrage and the history of the founding of the League of Women Voters.

Attending from the Chicago League were Margaret Herring, Lois Snyder, Pris Mims and me. If you wish to be contacted to attend one of the meetings, leave me a message at the office: 312-939-5935 x 28.

*Esta Hallen*

## **BOOK CLUB**

Very few people have attended the Book Club meetings. Unless you let the office know about some book which you would like to discuss with others, this activity will be suspended until such time as Leaguers request it.

One thought from the Education Chair is the background books LWVUS recommended: Diane Ravitch's: *The Death and Life of the American School System* and Linda Darling-Hammond's: *The Flat Earth and Education*. If you would like a meeting on these books, let the office know, we will set it up if there are more than three people who will attend.

## LWVUS EDUCATION STUDY

LWVUS has finally sent out the schedule for its national studies of the Federal Role in Education and Privatization. These must be completed by the next convention of LWVUS in June of 2012.

The material and the Consensus Questions on Education is to be available after May 3, 2011. It is to be a two-part study: the first on background and core standards; the second on equity and finance. LWVUS wants local Leagues to have the presentation with consensus so that those who hear the presentation are the ones who make the decisions.

Consensus for the League of Women Voters is done at a meeting where it is possible for members to not only share views but see the body language/expressions of those presenting those views. It is a face-to-face active interchange of ideas and requires that members attend (in Chicago) a unit meeting. Contact the Unit Leader to make your voice heard if you cannot attend a meeting. Consensus does not mean a vote, but is the sense of the majority of those members sometimes with comments.

This is going to be a MOST important subject – even if the newest version of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act is passed before our study is complete. The latest version “No Child Left Behind,” required that all schools be at or above a state standard by 2014. Secretary of Education, Arne Duncan, estimates that about 80% of the schools do not meet that standard today. Disaggregating cohorts of students by race/ethnic origin, poverty, special education, etc. has demonstrated the gap in achievement between white students and other groups.

It showed that schools which had aggregated the scores before and were acceptable overall, did not meet the criteria, especially for the minority student. Special Education Students, too, did not meet the standards. Average Yearly Progress (AYP) provided some wiggle room, but even that goal was unmet by these schools.

The strong commitment LWV has to equity is reflected in our desegregation position and must be incorporated into whatever comes out of this study. Desegregation no longer impacts upon education. Court decisions which preclude or lessen the use of race as a factor in equalization, mean that school districts have had to

move towards economics as the basis for trying to integrate students.

Charter Schools, Magnet Schools and other forms of choice have been added to the original decisions about public/private/parochial school or home schooling. Continuous pressures to provide vouchers or tax credits of some sort to those who send their children out of the public school system have been opposed by LWV at all levels. Studies have proven that private schools do not raise the achievement of all students. What they do is divert those students with parental support from the public schools, leaving the least motivated children, often from dysfunctional families, for public school teachers. Private, magnet and charter schools do not need to keep the student who does not meet their requirements.

Please plan on being part of the solution, go to Unit and Committee meetings and let your position be known.

*Winnie Slusser*

### **Unit Meetings**

#### Unit 1/5

Downtown - evening  
Monday, April 18 – 5:30 pm  
Leader – Margaret Herring

#### Unit 9/11

West Side - daytime  
Sunday, April 17 - 2:00 pm  
Third Unitarian Church  
301 N. Mayfield  
Leader – Joan Morton

#### Unit 21/35

Thursday, April 14 – 12:30 pm  
Home of Carol Ziegeldorf  
Leader – Carol Ziegeldorf

#### Unit 22

Downtown – daytime  
Thursday, April 21  
10:00 am - noon  
Leader – Bernice Fortini

#### Unit 66/74

Daytime - Montgomery Place  
Thursday, April 21- 1:00 pm  
Leader – Dorothy Scheff

## STATE OF THE CITY® LUNCHEON



Toni Preckwinkle, Keynote Speaker



Sheila Simon, Illinois Lt. Governor  
Margaret Herring, LWVChicago Co-President  
Dick Kay, Master of Ceremonies  
Esta Kallen, LWVChicago Co-President



Ken Dunn, Civic Contribution Honoree

Co-presidents, Esta Kallen and Margaret Herring welcomed all who attended the 25<sup>th</sup> State of the City® event held on March 18, 2011 at the Union League Club of Chicago. They also commented on the LWVChicago contributions to the community.

The Civic Contribution Award was presented to Ken Dunn, founder and president of the Resource Center and City Farm. In accepting the award, he stated that the basis of government is simple. We need both internal and external equality with equal justice for all. He

discussed a community where people can acquire skills to last a lifetime and where those skills are respected by all. The Center and City Farm “welcomes all of life on this planet.” The farm is 1.5 acres, has three full-time employees and additional seasonal employees. It produces good food for all, he concluded.

The Master of Ceremonies, Dick Kay, is the WCPT talk show host and former special Advocate for Health Care for the State of Illinois. He had been a reporter, writer, producer, political host, and political commentator at WMAQ, Channel 5. He lauded the LWV for its work during the 90 years of its existence and congratulated LWVChicago on the 25<sup>th</sup> State of the City® event.

Kay introduced Lt. Gov. Sheila Simon, a special guest. She announced that she had been a member of the Board of the Jackson County LWV and is a member of the Carbondale LWV. Attention must be focused on issues, participation is needed in events such as candidates’ forums in political races, she said.

Simon also added that LWV must make a passionate effort towards fairness in redistricting which must be done before the next statewide election. “We need a commitment and understanding that we are all in this together,” she declared. Lt. Gov. Simon is involved in setting up an exchange of local elected officials to see what can be done to make the situation better for everyone.

Keynote speaker, Cook County Board President, Toni Preckwinkle, said the government she leads has two obligations: to deliver good services and to do so as efficiently as possible.

The 2011 Cook County Budget was balanced and approved 17-0, she said. The sales tax increase will be rolled back 0.25% in 2012 and the remaining 0.25% in 2013.

Preckwinkle’s administration is committed to accountability and transparency and is looking for a new direction for government. She is also interested in increasing professionalism in the county work-force. The Boston Consulting Group and RSM McGladrey, Inc. have been retained to look at shared services such as purchasing, performance management, and a desk audit. She hopes to use performance measures in budgeting.

(continued on page 5)

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“Chicago is the capital of the Midwest,” she declared “and Cook County is the hub of the Midwest.”

Preckwinkle is consolidating four departments into a bureau of economic development. Health care and criminal justice account for two thirds of the county budget, she explained.

An independent board governs the health care system. She suggested the possibility that the city’s health clinics be incorporated into the county’s system. She also supports the challenge of the competitive health care environment expected to occur in 2014. As president, she is concerned about people excluded from the safety net including undocumented immigrants and how the system could contract for care for those residents.

In criminal justice, Preckwinkle noted the “institutional racism” in sentencing. Most of the inmates in the County Jail (and the Juvenile Temporary Detention Center) are black and brown and predominantly male, she observed. A white man is eight times less subject to jail, she added. We should look for alternative sentencing for non-violent offenders, she recommended. Supporting programs to ensure that students graduate from high school is a must since the diploma is needed for any kind of job. She would like to see the jail provide more programs and services for violent offenders to reduce the recidivism rate.

“Democracy is the best and most fragile governmental system on Earth,” she commented.

President Preckwinkle said that 51 square miles in the county are unincorporated. Her administration will attempt to persuade adjacent municipalities to annex these areas, thus saving the county money used to provide certain governmental services.

*Norma Braude*

## **LUNCH & LEARN**

LWV Cook County presented Sheriff Tom Dart as the speaker for the Lunch & Learn event held March 6, at the DePaul University Center.

Sheriff Dart described the three main functions of his office: policing, running the Cook County

Jail, and enforcement of court orders (such as evictions). The Sheriff’s office has 7,000 employees of which 550 are police officers, who serve the unincorporated areas of Cook County, and 3,000 are corrections officers. The budget was \$400 million, but has been cut to \$340 million, a 15% decrease, he said.

“The Cook County Jail (CCJ) is the largest mental health institution in the State.” He explained that because the State has reduced facilities for the mentally ill, the jails have become the place to temporarily house them. He estimates that over 3,000 of the 10,000 people regularly housed in the CCJ have serious mental health issues. The cost of mentally ill prisoners is four to five times that of the \$125.00 per day for a regular prisoner.

Dart discussed the Bur Oak Cemetery situation in detail. He also discussed the juvenile justice system, court security and the job of policing unincorporated Cook County areas.

As a former prosecutor and state legislator, Dart understands how both the legislature and courts work. He described the State legislators as being comfortable with the status quo. One of their favorite strategies is to use a task force to delay any kind of action on any problem.

Sheriff Dart also described his actions in eviction, where he forced the courts to be more careful before the Department could put people on the street.

The Sheriff’s Office is looking for partnerships to work with people who have been in the criminal justice system. At this point that office has several churches in the project, but is seeking more partners.

In cost saving measures, Sheriff Dart has suggested combining the Park District police with his department and having weekend court sessions only at the Criminal Courts Building instead of at all the courthouses.

Dart also commented on women’s issues, the differences between the county jail and prison, recidivism and the problem of attempting remedial programs when inmates are in jail for only a short time.

*Norma Braude*

(see the LWV Cook County website for another report)

## MARCH SOCIAL POLICY COMMITTEE

### OUR CHILDREN – OUR FUTURE

“According to a nationwide hunger survey of 1,509 adults commissioned by Tyson Foods and the Food Research and Action Center (FRAC) and conducted by Hart Research Associates, one in four Americans are worrying about putting food on the table in the next year. The survey found that 59 percent of respondents did not know that parents of hungry children have full-time jobs, and assumed that hunger was concentrated in urban areas.” (FRAC, March 11, 2011) “Hunger is widespread despite record levels of participation in the program Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) – 43.5 million people currently receive benefits” according to the Coalition on Human Needs “A Better Budget for All.” The document indicates more are eligible, but don’t know they are and besides the “benefit levels are too low to provide enough food.”

Putting food on the table is a primary concern for our children – our future. The recession has led to a steep increase in child poverty. In Illinois, the child poverty rate was 19% in 2009, up from 17% the year before. In 2010, *Illinois Kids Count* recognized that children are the hidden casualties of a recession. “Children who grow up in poverty, for example, are more likely to struggle with reading and math, be held back in grades, have behavioral problems in class, and ultimately, drop out of school.” In 2009, 9% of white children, a shocking 39% of Black children and 25% of Latino children were in poverty in Illinois. (*Ill. Kids Count 2011*, p. 23)

Marion Wright Edelman, of The Children’s Defense Fund, in her “Child Watch Column” writes, “When 40% of Black children are born poor, 85 percent of Black children cannot read or do math at grade level in fourth grade and later almost half drop out of school, and a Black boy born in 2001 has a one in three chance of going to prison sometime in his lifetime, we know we are facing a crisis.”

When children are born in poverty, they enter the school system with fewer opportunities to develop their cognitive skills, a more limited vocabulary, poorer nutrition and health, and are at greater risk for emotional and social problems. The effects of poverty follow them through life with poorer health, fewer job opportunities and the possibility to earn good salaries.

Ruby Takanishi, President of the Foundation for Child Development, speaking at the 2011 Voices of Illinois Children Symposium, “Great at Eight,” says countries that invest in children have better outcomes. The US spends only \$.10 of every health care dollar on children and youth and 4-6 times as much on the elderly. One result is that the US has the highest rate of infant mortality of industrialized countries. If we want a healthy future, then we must have governmental policies that reduce child poverty. We must have three pillars: Child health and nutrition, good Pre-K-3<sup>rd</sup> grade education, and economic security for families. Governmental policies can reduce child poverty. In England Tony Blair managed, even with the recession, to achieve a 40% reduction in child poverty through his policies while the U.S. managed only a 3% reduction. Takanishi says America is an individualistic society. Obama and the Kellogg Foundation, as well as, Ounce of Prevention recommend care and concern for children in a seamless progression from birth through college. If we would follow this pattern, our children – our future, would be secure.

*Lois Snyder*

### LAKE MICHIGAN LWV

The LMLWV met for their quarterly meeting in the Chicago office on March 19. Among their areas of emphasis for 2011 are:

- Work to implement Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI), a five year federally funded plan. The first year, 2010, \$475 million were provided by Congress. This year, President Obama has asked for \$300 million, but Congress has suggested \$200 million.
- Pass Great Lakes restoration legislation, which will put in place permanent authority at EPA for the GLRI, including guidance on how to target Great Lakes restoration dollars and set priorities.
- Stop Asian carp from destroying the Great Lakes.
- Support efforts to reduce the use of pesticides and promote the use of alternatives; advocate for water conservation and resource protection; monitor water quality with particular attention to pharmaceuticals in the waters; and address permitted discharges into the Great Lakes with a goal to reduce the amount of pollutants discharged.

Illinois will host the annual meeting in 2011. A date has not been set; it will be during the fall.

*Pat Graunke*

## LWVUS

Page 3 of this **Voter** provides a heads-up on the Education Study which was passed at Convention in 2010. Please consider joining LWV Chicago's Committee as this is a very important issue which will affect our children as we try to prepare them for the future.

LWVUS has expressed concern over the stalled ethics legislation and applauds the Senators' efforts regarding budget negotiations.

Action Alert – support Clean Air! Oppose legislation to strip EPA Authority from regulating harmful carbon pollution Let your Representative know that you want CLEAN AIR. This is in the House now and if the house passes this, you will need to contact your Senators.

## LWVIL

Friday April 29, 2011, the Illinois League will be hosting its annual State of the State Luncheon at the Union League Club of Chicago. The Key-note Address will be given by Charles Thomas, ABC political reporter.

LWVIL is most pleased that Governor Quinn has signed into law the abolition of the death penalty. This makes us one of sixteen states with this position and the fourth to abolish it in recent years.

## LAKE MICHIGAN LWV

The Lake Michigan LWV is an Inter-League Organization (ILO) made up of those local leagues which surround Lake Michigan. LWVChicago is a member. An article on their recent meeting is on page 6. Their annual meeting will be held in Illinois this year in the fall.

## LWVCC

A report on the March Lunch & Learn meeting is on page 5 of this **Voter**.

The LWVCC Annual Meeting will be held on May 16, 2011. The speakers after the business meeting will be Cook County Commissioners Bridget Gainer and Timothy Schneider. The meeting will be held in at the University Center (525 S. State St., Chicago) and is open to all

League members (and their friends). LWVChicago has three delegates who have voting privileges for the morning meeting.

There will be another Lunch & Learn meeting during the summer. These meetings are open to all League members and their friends, and are LWV Cook County's fund raisers for operating costs, which include their office.

## LWVChicago

The Chicago League of Women Voters held a successful State of the City® Luncheon on Friday, March 19, 2011 at the Union League Club. Thanks to all who attended and supported our Education Fund.

On pages 4 and 5 in this **Voter** you will find a report on the Luncheon. A report on the last Social Policy Committee meeting is found on page 6.

The Sweet Home Chicago proposed city ordinance was quickly tabled by Ald. Patrick O'Connor during the February City Council meeting. Ald. Walter Burnett and community leaders chose not to take it off the table at the March City Council meeting. Rather, they have decided to wait until April or even May, when new Mayor Rahm Emanuel presides over his first City Council meeting.

Please submit names for officers and members of the board of LWVChicago for the 2011-2013 term. A president or co-presidents must be elected to serve out the 2011-2012 term so as to keep the alternation of president/vice-presidents and secretary/treasurer in line in alternating years.

### ***The Chicago Voter***

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Esta Kallen & Margaret Herring	Co-Presidents
Helene Gabelnick	Vice President
Pat Graunke	Vice President
Norma Braude	Secretary
Rochelle Riffer	Treasurer
Winnie Slusser	Voter Editor pro-tem

## **Application for the LWVChicago Board or Nominating Committee**

The Nominating Committee of the League of Women Voters of Chicago is in the process of identifying Members for Board and Nominating Committee positions.

This is a working board. Board members are expected to attend the Annual Meeting and all Board meetings in person, asked to participate in Board and League activities, committees, briefings and special projects or events. Members who accumulate three unexcused absences to Board meetings will be considered to have resigned from the Board and will be dropped.

If you would like to make a nomination to the Board or the Nominating Committee, please complete the form below, notify the person whom you have nominated and ask for her/his acceptance of the nomination. If this is of interest to you, nominate yourself!

For President there is one vacancy for a one-year term.

For Secretary there is one vacancy for a two-year term.

For Treasurer there is one vacancy for a two-year term.

For Board members there are at least four and no more than six vacancies for two year terms

For the Nominating Committee the Chair and two members each for a one year term.

Please use the form below and attach information for each name.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

I am willing to serve on the Board    yes    no    I am willing to be off board    yes    no

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_ Fax \_\_\_\_\_

- What special background/experience will the Applicant bring to the Board or Nominating Committee?
- Why will the Applicant make an effective Board or Nominating Committee Member?
- How will the applicant's leadership style contribute to the management of the Chicago League's activities?
- What areas of special interest on the Board would the Applicant choose?

ALL BOARD MEMBERS are expected to be involved in:

- Membership
- Development/fundraising (State of the City® Luncheon, other)
- Voter Service

Board members may select to be involved in at least one of the below:

- League Issues (Health Care, Education, Fiscal Policy, Housing, etc.)
- Observers at City Council, Board of Education and other city agencies.
- Communications - Community Outreach (the **Voter**, website, media contacts)

Person completing form \_\_\_\_\_

Contact information \_\_\_\_\_