



The Chicago Voter

League of Women Voters of Chicago
Website - www.LWVChicago.org

October 2010
Vol. 61, No. 3



DATES TO REMEMBER

Meetings held in the
LWV Conference Room
Unless otherwise noted

Saturday, October 2nd
Education Committee
10:00 am – noon

Monday, October 4th
Social Policy Committee
10:00 am – noon
Chair – Lois Snyder

Executive Committee
Call of the co-presidents

Tuesday, October 12th
LWVChicago Board
5:30 pm

Wednesday, October 13th
Lunch with the League
Field Museum Trip
Reservations
Due by October 8th

Saturday, October 23rd
Education Briefing
10:00 am – noon
Chair – Winnie Slusser

State of the City[®]
Committee meeting
1:00 pm – 3:00 pm
Bernice Fortini
Patricia Graunke

LWVChicago Book Club
To be announced
Contact – Bernice Fortini
or Pat Graunke

Call the League
312-939-5935 x 28

CO-PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

Fall and the election season are upon us. This year we will go to the polls on November 2nd, and the election is important, as every election is important. We must not be distracted by the upcoming City election early next year and neglect the federal, state, county, and municipal offices that will be filled in November.

Page 2 of this **Voter** is devoted to the election timetable and issues at all levels. In addition on page 4 you will find more information on the proposed Constitutional Amendment that would provide for recall of a sitting governor, as well as if the recall succeeds, election of a successor.

The Chicago ballot will include a judicial ballot. Sitting judges up for retention, must receive a 60% favorable vote of the votes cast for that judge. Many voters ignore the judicial ballot because they know nothing about a judge or a judicial candidate. A life ring is floating within reach of each of us.

The Judicial Performance Commission of Cook County (JPC) has compiled a detailed evaluation of the 41 judges who will appear on the judicial retention ballot in Cook County. The commission is composed of seventeen lawyers, civic leaders and academicians, two members are representatives of the League of Women Voters. The JPC has two purposes: to educate Cook County Voters by providing more and better information about the candidates for retention and to identify issues, which are not disqualifying, that JPC believes can and should be remedied. These are issues such as temperament and courtroom management. Remedies can be peer mentoring, continuing education and court watching.

The LWV Illinois website, lwvil.org, provides information and links to the JPC evaluations at voteforjudges.org and chicagoappleseed.org. These web sites are helpful because they provide a compilation of the ratings of ten bar associations and the information is available now for use with early and absentee voting. The LWV Chicago website, lwvchicago.org, also provides candidate and judge evaluation links.

The Chicago Bar Association and the Chicago Council of Lawyers have posted evaluations. Their evaluations include professional histories of judges and candidates and evaluations of their performance. No doubt as November 2nd approaches, other bar associations will post their assessments as well as recommendations online. Probably just before the election, the newspapers will include a summary of these various evaluations, with their own recommendations.

Continued on page 5

THE NOVEMBER ELECTION Time Schedule

REGISTRATION: Closes on October 5, 2010. Deputy registrars must turn in all registration forms no later than October 6, 2010. There will be no Deputy Registrar training during the month of October.

ABSENTEE BALLOTS: A registered voter may request an Absentee Ballot for from October 4 through 28, 2010. Returned Absentee Ballots must be postmarked before the polls close on November 2, 2010.

"GRACE PERIOD" REGISTRATION AND VOTING will be available from October 5 through 26, 2010. This can only be done at 69 W. Washington St. and voting must be done absentee at this time.

EARLY VOTING will be available from October 11 through 28, 2010 from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm, Monday through Saturday. Each ward will have one Early Voting Site, plus there is also Early Voting at the Board of Election Commissioners, 69 W. Washington St. All sites are handicapped accessible with parking (except the downtown site). Voters will not be asked to give a reason for voting early.

Issues for candidates

As you attend candidates' forums and other political meetings consider the following issues along with the League positions and the candidates' stances on these and other matters.

National Issues With LWVUS positions

The tax cut question should be resolved before the end of the year when tax cuts for all expire. If it is not resolved this will be an issue before the new Congress.

Efforts to repeal the Health Care Act, which LWVUS supported, although it did not meet all of our criteria, will not go away. Having worked for its passage, LWVUS wants it to succeed.

Immigration will certainly be an issue again in the next session of Congress.

The problems of unemployment and job creation will also be uppermost in the minds of many members of Congress.

The LWVUS Social Policy positions also must be upheld as we meet the needs of the disadvantaged in all walks of life.

Information on positions may be found on the national website for LWV.org. The latest ***Impact on Issues*** is the publication.

State Issues

The only Constitutional Amendment which will appear on the Ballot is the Recall Amendment. LWVIL does not have a position on this issue as it has never been studied.

What it will do: it will provide for a special election to recall the governor and for a special election to elect a successor governor.

Recall differs from impeachment in that **voters** decide recall, the **legislature**, impeachment. There is more information on page 4.

LWVIL has positions on the following issues:

Adequate finance for the State's needs. If the lame duck session does not act on this before the end of the year, this will still be the most important issue. All else depends upon it.

State Redistricting. – See September's ***Voter*** and the article on page 3.

See the LWV website LWVIL.org for more information. The latest ***Where We Stand 2010-2012*** is the publication.

County Issues

There are four areas which the county is working on: Budget, Health and Hospital Systems; Juvenile Justice, Forest Preserve District. ***Where We Stand for Cook County*** contains all the positions which pertain to the County issues. Refer to their website LWVCookCounty.org.

Municipal Issues

While the aldermanic and mayoral elections will not be held until February, there is an election on the ballot for three Trustees of the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District (MWRD).

A current issue relates to the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) proposed water quality standards for the Chicago River. More information is on page 4.

REDISTRICTING

The official US Census 2010 data will be reported to President Obama by December 31, 2010. This data is then provided to the individual states to enable them to redistrict their U.S. House of Representatives districts (and everything else!) in March 2011. The Primary Election in 2012 will be the first to use the new districts, which will not change until after the next census in 2020.

On page 3 of the September **Chicago Voter** the positions of LWVUS and LWVIL on redistricting were presented. In brief, these positions support the Voting Rights Act, recent Supreme Court decisions and specify criteria regarding respecting existing political boundaries such as cities and district boundaries within them.

In addition, LWVCookCounty has the following position:

Cook County Districts

A. The League of Women Voters of Cook County supports the current practice of electing the Cook County Board of Commissioners from single-member districts.

B. To ensure that citizens' interests can be adequately represented by their commissioners, each district should be drawn:

1. To represent the fair distribution of population in accordance with the principles of one person-one vote.
2. To respect equitable minority representation.
3. To create compact and contiguous districts.

C. To the greatest extent possible, districts should not divide established boundaries and the following should also be applied:

1. Districts should not divide suburban municipalities.
2. Within the City of Chicago, precinct and ward boundaries should be respected.

The existing districts in Illinois (and many other states) do not follow the guidelines which are part of LWV positions. The result of the way these were drawn (usually without any public hearings) is that often it is the politicians who pick their voters, rather than the voters who select their representatives. This is not desirable since it often produces less accountability, incumbent protection, increased loyalty to party

leaders, less electoral competition and less diversity in the elected bodies. In turn we see corruption, gridlock, poor public policy decisions fiscal disaster, low public confidence and trust.

There have been numerous recent efforts to change the redistricting process. California recently passed Proposition 11, but even with that change the congressional redistricting responsibility has been left with the CA General Assembly. In Illinois most recently LWVIL and many individual League members and other organizations worked (but did not succeed) to obtain signatures for the FairMap amendment. State Senator Kwame Raoul (Il 13) proposed a redistricting bill which passed the Illinois Senate but not the House.

What do we do now? As League members become knowledgeable about the redistricting process and alternate maps which can be drawn we should also help others become aware so that we can all lobby the people responsible for drawing the new maps and exert some influence on the structure of the new districts since they will be in effect until after Census 2020!

Helene Gabelnick

UNIT MEETINGS

Unit 1/ 5

Downtown – League Office
Monday, October 18th 5:30 pm
Leader – Margaret Herring

Unit 9/11

West Side – Unitarian Church
Sunday, October 3rd, 2 pm
Leader – Joan Morton

Unit 21/35

North Side day/evening
Leader – Carol Westerlund

Unit 22

Downtown – League Office
Thursday, October 21th – 10:00 am
Leader – Bernice Fortini

Unit 41/42

Southwest Side
Call the Office

Unit 66/74

Montgomery Place
Thursday, October 21st – 1:00 pm
Leader – Dorothy Scheff

RECALL AMENDMENT

This amendment is to Section 7 of Article III will provide for a special election to recall a governor and for another special election to elect a successor governor. Three/fifths of those voting on the question or a majority of those voting in the election must vote "YES" in order for this amendment to become part of the constitution.

Go to lwvill.org or Vote411.org for a summary of the amendment and the pro and con positions. The summary gives the time frame and the details of the requirements for recall to occur. Signatures of 20 Representatives and 10 Senators (but not more than 50% from the same political party) are needed on the initial recall affidavit. The number of petition signatures required is 15% of the total votes cast for Governor and these must be collected within 150 days and must come from at least 25 of Illinois' 102 counties.

Pro reasons: improve performance, retain voter control of officials, stimulate interest in public affairs, make governor more responsible to constituents.

Con reasons – more frequent elections, inaction because of fear of voters, expense, partisanship may lead to abuses by well-financed special interest groups.

THE CHICAGO RIVER

The Chicago River was reversed years ago (in 1900) to protect our Lake Michigan water supply from sewage and improve shipping. The Metropolitan Water Reclamation District (MWRD), unlike in many other cities, does not fully disinfect the wastewater it releases into the Chicago River.

At present the Chicago River can be used for fishing and various boating activities but not for swimming. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has proposed new water quality standards which would require disinfection to protect the health of not only swimmers, but of boaters and wildlife as well. If implemented, this disinfection is expected to be a costly enterprise at the three sewage treatment plants.

Ask the eight candidates: - Is it time NOW to change this policy? Is health more important than cost?

LUNCH WITH THE LEAGUE

Join us for "Lunch with the League" on Wednesday, October 13th at 10 AM to view the current exhibition "Climate Change" at the Chicago Field Museum. This exhibition explains the science behind this most urgent issue of the century and the implications for future generations. Find out how you can help to reduce global climate change.

Afterwards, please join us for lunch.

Email Preslwvchicago@gmail.com or call 312-939-5935 x28 or by October 8th to make your reservation.

The admission charges vary,

- Membership - \$5.00 for the exhibition
- Non-member - \$15.00 plus \$5.00 for the exhibition
- Non-member senior - \$13.00 plus \$5.00 for the exhibition
- Free passes are available at the Chicago Public Library and the cost would be \$5.00 for the exhibition.

If you are coming via public transportation:

- Downtown and North Michigan Ave.: Bus #146 on Michigan north of Wacker Dr. and State St. south of Wacker Dr.
- Orange, Green & Red line trains – exit at Roosevelt and take #146 to the museum.
- South Shore or Metra to Museum Campus (11th Street) and walk east to the museum.

We will meet at the elephant exhibit on the main floor. Hope to see you there.

Bernice Fortini

BOOK CLUB

Plans for the October meeting will appear in the Weekly report emailed to Leaguers and on the website. As noted in the Co-president's column, your suggestions for books to discuss will be appreciated, let us know 312-939-5935 x28.

Pat Graunke

A NOTE ABOUT WEB SITES

When a web site reference is included in an article the initial <http://www> has been omitted so that less space is needed. Your browser will "take" you to the correct site when you enter the main part of the web site name which is given.

CLARA BUCK FLEMING

February 6, 1927- August 29, 2010

Clara Fleming was a faithful member and strong supporter of the League of Women Voters of Chicago for over 20 years.

She graduated in the first class from Provident Hospital School of Nursing in 1948, from Case Western Reserve University in 1962, and received a Masters Degree from the University of Illinois School of Public Health in 1975. As a trained nurse, she assumed the Health Care portfolio as a member of our Board of Directors. As chair of the Health Committee she piloted us through the LWVUS study on Health Care and kept us informed on developments as Congress worked on the new Health Care Bill.

A tireless worker, Clara, also took on the role of Development and Fund Raising Director and worked creatively in that capacity leading LWV Chicago as we sponsored theater parties, store coupon sales and the raffle of an afghan, which was to be a group project. She ended up making many of the squares, however, and sewed them together herself. Clara served a term as State of the City® co-chair and was always an active SOC committee member. In addition, she served as leader of her local unit, 66/74.

Clara was a member of the Hyde Park Union Church where she served as president of the Women's Society as well as helping with the Church's food pantry.

She leaves behind a son in the Chicago area and a daughter and two granddaughters in California, and a host of others who knew her as beloved "Aunt Clara."

Dedication and self-sacrifice were her characteristics; she was a caring friend. Clara leaves a huge hole in our organization and in our hearts. We will miss her.

Lois Snyder

VOTING IN YOUR PRECINCT

If you vote on November 2, 2010 in your home precinct there are a few items of which you should be aware so that you know that the election process is properly functioning. As a

voter you have no official authority but you may ask questions if something doesn't seem right to you. The judges of election can consult their handbook and show you the information or they can call Election Central (312-269-7870) for advice. You may also call Election Central yourself and ask a question or request that a Field Investigator be alerted. If a Field Investigator is at the polling place they have authority to direct the judges.

You will be given two paper ballots (unless you use the Touch Screen). One ballot is for the proposed Recall Amendment; the other is for the candidates. A judge should not ask for your driver's license, or any other form of ID, except in special cases when the preprinted application in the election binder is not on white paper. The election judges are to verify that the voter's signature matches with the one on record.

Even if the ballot scanner or touch screen voting equipment is not functioning, voting should continue. There are specific instructions for the judges to follow in these situations.

If a handicapped voter asks for assistance, two judges, one from each party, are to provide the assistance.

Terry Williams

CO-PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

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We on the Board of LWVChicago know that not everyone has easy access to a computer and the internet. The Chicago Public Libraries provide this service and librarians can assist patrons. Or – ask your unit leader.

The Chicago League is stretching out. We are trying out forums other than Saturday morning briefings to inform ourselves about issues. Events such as Lunch with the League, the Book Club and committee meetings will be announced on our website, through the Voter and our weekly email. If you have a topic of interest for Lunch with the League, contact Bernice Fortini (bernicefortini@yahoo.com), chair of the Membership Committee. Pat Graunke (patriciagraunke@gmail.com) is the person to contact for suggestions of books related to issues of good governance.

Margaret Herring – Co-president

LWVUS

LWVUS is concerned about last minute barriers to voting occurring around the country.

The League is blogging: by email, Facebook My Space and DiggThis.

The DISCLOSE act was rejected last week, but will undoubtedly come up in the lame duck session after the election.

Get Ready for Global Day of Climate Action, October 10, 2010. Check out the website for 10/10/10 activities on climate change Toolkit for Climate Action.

A sale is going on at the League Store – the 90th Anniversary items are 50% off. Take advantage of this opportunity.

LWVIL

LWVIL and ABC7 will present “Vote 2010: The Candidates Debate” on October 19th and 20th, 10:35 - 11:35 pm. The Senatorial candidates for Illinois will be featured. George Stephanopolis will moderate on October 19th and Ron Magers will do so on the 20th. Tune in to hear the candidates answer questions from a panel of experts in the area of Illinois government.

There is a new online VOTERS GUIDE for all state races through the National League’s VOTE411: Governor, Attorney General, Secretary of State, Comptroller, Treasurer, U.S. Senator, Representatives in Congress, State Representatives and those State Senatorial districts up for election.

LWVCC

Join the interest committees: Budget, Forest Preserve District, Health and Hospital Systems, Juvenile Justice or the newly formed Special Funds Budget (This last is a two year study – voted upon at the last annual meeting.)

LWVCC is waiting for answers to their questions from the candidates for county commissioner and county-wide elected officials and will post these. See cookcounty.il.lwvnet.org and Vote411.org for updates.

If you know of anyone who would be interested, LWVCC offers presentations on Cook County Government. Contact them 312-939-5935 x27.

The Cook County Observer Blog provides reports of meetings of the county government which various Leaguers have attended.

LWVCC will be having another Lunch and Learn meeting in mid-November. Lunch is provided at \$30.00 per person. These meetings have been most informative, and the Chicago Voter includes reports on them for your information.

LWVCHICAGO

The Co-president’s Column covers the Judicial Ballots which will be voted on in November. Information provided by all levels of League should enable you to make informed decisions.

As noted elsewhere on this page 10/10/10 is a day for considering Climate Change and doing something about it. Our Lunch with the League meeting at the Field Museum falls after this date, but will provide us with information to be used in the future. Margaret Herring focuses on water while Pat Graunke, one of our vice-presidents, works with other aspects of the environment.

The Briefing Session for October will be on Education, as we will be discussing the consensus questions which should lead to a new position in **Where We Stand** for LWVChicago. If you are interested in helping form these questions, please let Winnie Slusser know and she will send out the tentative questions ahead of time. You can contact her through the office or email her at winnieslusser@aol.com. To attend the committee meeting itself, contact her directly. We hope to finalize the questions in one meeting but if necessary we will set up a second one before the briefing. We need a position from which we can act in the best interest of all of Chicago’s children.

The Chicago Voter

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