



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF EVANSTON

THE INTERCOM

SEPTEMBER - OCTOBER 2014

LEGISLATORS HIGHLIGHT SPRINGFIELD EFFORTS

– by Elizabeth Kinney

The LWVE 2014 legislative update was held on August 25 at the Merion. The following legislators participated (L-R): Representative Laura Fine, 17th Legislative District, Senator Heather Steans, 7th Legislative District, Senator Daniel Biss, 9th Legislative District, Representative Robyn Gabel, 18th Legislative District and Representative Lou Lang, 16th Legislative District. Each legislator made a brief statement and then the floor was opened for questions.



Laura Fine spoke about three items of interest that passed during the last session. One provides that when an insurance carrier requires pre-approval for prescription drugs, then the approval or denial must take place within 72 hours. Also related to health insurance, providers must now disclose what drugs are covered by the policy. Lastly, she spoke about legislation to provide the schools with expanded authority to deal with cyberbullying.

Lou Lang described his five-year campaign to authorize medical marijuana. As a result, by spring 2015, Illinois residents should be able to purchase it to relieve suffering. Lang also explained the gridlock in Springfield, which hampers efforts to achieve fiscal goals.

Heather Steans, Chair of the Appropriation Committee, emphasized the need for Illinois to have fiscal integrity. Thus, it needs to stop borrowing to pay operating costs. While the state has cut spending in a lot of areas including, mental health, prisons and Medicaid, it also has to address ways of increasing its revenues. In this regard, all of the speakers support continuing the temporary income tax increase, which is set to expire in January 2015. At present 23% of the state’s budget goes for pensions and debt service. While she supports a graduated rate income tax, for political reasons it is not expected to get on the ballot this year. Steans pointed out

that Illinois is the first state to ban the production or sale of personal cosmetic products containing microbeads which, among other things, endanger Great Lakes fish.

Daniel Biss noted that a large number of people in both the state and the nation do not have a retirement plan. He outlined a bill that has passed the Senate, but not the Assembly, to provide a mechanism for individuals without retirement plans (other than Social

Security) to establish them. He spoke about the bill passed last December to reduce the unfunded liability for public pensions. The action has been challenged in court. This legislation only applies to state pensions. He noted that there are many local governments as well as other governmental entities with similar shortfalls.

Robyn Gabel, chair of the Human Services Committee, explained the important Medicaid reforms that were passed this year. She was involved with the passage of a bill which requires that the refill bottles for electronic cigarettes, which contain high levels of nicotine, must be child-proof containers. She also spoke about a training program for community health workers leading to certification. While she proposed a tax on sugar-sweetened beverages as a way to discourage their consumption, it did not pass. Finally, she told us about a bill that passed this year which provided \$30 million to the Illinois Power Agency to buy solar power for peak power times. This access to solar power is important because it provides another source of power which the grid can use at peak power times.

All the legislators agreed that major fiscal issues remain unresolved, but important steps have been made in initiating serious discussion; they welcome engagement and support from groups like the League.

COOK COUNTY LEAGUE LEARNS ABOUT THE BOARD OF REVIEW

– by Priscilla Mims, LWV Cook County Board Member

Cook County Board of Review Commissioner Dan Patlak was the featured speaker at the annual “Lunch & Learn with the League” event sponsored by the League of Women Voters of Cook County on August 7. The Board of Review is composed of three Commissioners, elected by district, who rule on appeals of property assessments by the Cook County Assessor. In 2014, the Board dealt with 402,000 appeals for tax year 2013.

2014 also marked the third year in a row that the 2nd installment

property tax bill was sent out on time. Prior to 2012, it had been 34 years since that had occurred. The Board of Review had calculated that for each month the 2nd installment bill had been late in the past, there were \$3 million in additional costs for all the taxing bodies within Cook County.

The property tax system offices are the Recorder of Deeds (who records all property transactions), the Assessor (who does the

continued on page 6

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Dear League Friends,

Greetings at the end of this summer – I hope you found time for fun and relaxation during our unusually mild and rainy summer. Now it's time once again to get on with the business of the League. I begin this year reminding us of our program goals, which were adopted at the Annual Meeting in May. In brief they are:

- **ACTIVELY PARTICIPATE** in LWVIL study on Charter Schools.
- **SUPPORT** Evanston's "Climate Action Campaign" to reduce Evanston's greenhouse gas emissions by 20% by 2016.
- **CREATE** a fact-finding task force to review the City of Evanston's efforts in the area of economic development.
- **SUPPORT**, to the degree possible, passage of two referendum items on the November 2014 ballot, should they be included: Yes! for Independent Maps, and GRIT (Graduated Rate Income Tax Amendment).

Beginning with the fourth goal, as you probably know, neither measure was supported by the required legislative action. In the case of the redistricting measure the court found that the language was incorrect in addition to not having enough valid signatures on the petitions. The GRIT bills were never brought to a vote as it was determined there were not enough votes in the General Assembly for passage. There are legislative solutions being pursued but it is probable that both will require additional legislative efforts and signature and petition drives. There is obvious citizen support for both so I am not prepared to give up hope just yet.

The remaining 3 goals are before us for the year.

The Charter school study will begin this fall. This is the Study Timeline:

- **JUNE 2014:** LWVIL distributed overview with resources to local Leagues so that local committees can plan how to study the issues.
- **SEPTEMBER 2014:** LWVIL sends the complete study kit to local Leagues
- **JANUARY 31, 2015:** Consensus reports from local Leagues due to LWVIL
- **MARCH 2015:** State Board votes on the updated position
- **JUNE 2015:** State Convention - Delegates vote on the updated position

For those with internet access, this is the page on the LWVIL site with all the relevant study material: www.lwvil.org/charter-schools.html. If you would like a set of these materials please contact the office, 847-859-7883, and leave your name and mailing address.

I am most excited about the prospects of involving all of you and other Evanston residents in the program goal to support the Climate Action Campaign and the goals of the Sustainability office of the city. You are invited to think about holding a "house party" with your neighbors and other friends to hear about steps to take to help achieve the "livability" goals. See Eleanor Revelle's article in this issue, and check out the program and goals at cityofevanston/sustainability.

The Local Government committee recently met with Johanna Nyden, the Economic Development Division Manager of the City. She is interested in working with the League in making the process for grant applications more transparent and accessible for all businesses. There will be ongoing discussions about the economic development objectives of the city and the appropriate way in which we will respond at the League.

Plan on joining in the work toward one of our goals, or more than one or all of them! They are all worthy of our close attention and our collective effort. Thank you and welcome to the "new year."

Cate

League of Women Voters® of Evanston

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Web Site: www.lwve.org

2014-2015 ELECTED OFFICERS

President	Cate Whitcomb
VP Membership	Casey Christensen
Treasurer	Betty Hayford
Secretary	Joan Lakebrink

2014-2015 ELECTED DIRECTORS

Local Government – Observer Corps
Jessie Feldman

Voter Service – Registration
Mary Morris

Voter Service – Forums
Jennifer O'Neil

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Karen Hunt

Members at Large
Gloria Callaci Ellen Browne

Nominating Committee Chair
Cheryl Wollin

Off-Board Appointments

Webmaster Mary Lewis
Intercom Newsletter
Helen Gagel Julie Winsberg

Office Coordinator
Katy Compere Pendleton

THE INTERCOM

September - October 2014

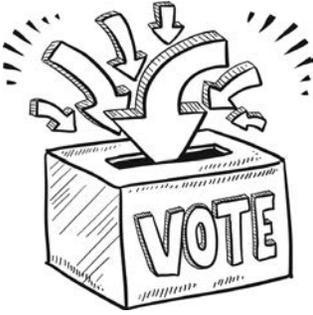
THE INTERCOM is the newsletter of the League of Women Voters® of Evanston

@ We have a new email address
LWVEvanston@gmail.com



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VOTER SERVICE ROUNDUP



The League is gearing up for the November election, registering voters, providing nonpartisan information, and hosting candidate forums. Thanks to Mary Morris and Jennifer O'Neil, LWV Voter Service co-chairs, for leading this effort.

CALLING DEPUTY REGISTRARS

League voter registration for the

November 4 General Election is scheduled at the Evanston Public Library, 1703 Orrington Avenue for the following dates: Saturday, September 20, Tuesday, September 23 (National Voter Registration Day), Saturday, September 27 and Saturday, October 4 from 1 to 3 p.m. Please contact Mary Morris at 847.457.5572 or 550morris@live.com to volunteer.

NOVEMBER 2014 ELECTION

GENERAL ELECTION	Nov. 4
LAST DAY TO REGISTER to Vote	Oct. 7
GRACE PERIOD Registration & Voting	Oct. 8 thru Nov. 1
EARLY VOTING for Election	Oct. 20 thru Nov. 1

CHANGES DUE TO PUBLIC ACT 98-0691 – ELECTIONS OMNIBUS BILL

This bill establishes a pilot program for Election Day registration. Unregistered voters may now register and cast ballots on Election Day at limited sites.

- Grace period registration will be extended to the Sunday and Monday before Election Day at limited sites.
- Early voting will extend an extra day to the Sunday before the election. The Monday-Friday before the election, early voting sites will remain open an additional two hours until 7:00 p.m.
- Photo IDs are not required during the 2014 general election. Signature verification will continue.

CANDIDATE FORUMS: 17th District State Representative Saturday, September 27 10:00 am

Wilmette Village Hall, 1200 Wilmette Ave., Wilmette, IL

LAURA FINE (D, Incumbent)

KATHLEEN MYALLS (R)

Sponsored by the Evanston, Glenview & Wilmette Leagues

ONLINE VOTER REGISTRATION IS NOW AVAILABLE IN ILLINOIS

Online voter registration was created by Public Act 98-115. Here's how it works:

- An individual may apply to register online on the home page of the State Board of Elections' website at www.elections.il.gov. In the spotlight area of the page, click "Online Voter Registration", or access the system directly at ova.elections.il.gov. The system is offered in English, Spanish, Chinese and Hindi.
- The applicant must have an Illinois driver's license or state identification card issued by the Secretary of State. Required information includes the complete driver's license number or state identification number, the issue date of the driver's license or ID card, birth date and the last four digits of the applicant's Social Security number.
- The applicant must complete a certification (by checking a box) to affirm that the applicant is the person completing the application, the information is correct, and authorizing the Secretary of State to transmit the applicant's signature to the State Board of Elections. If a valid email address is provided, an email will be sent confirming receipt of the application. Then, the application will be transmitted to the Secretary of State.
- Within 48 hours of receiving an application, the registration system will send an email notice informing the applicant whether the information submitted matches the Secretary of State's database. If no email address is provided, the applicant may click on "Check your online application status" in the spotlight area of the State Board of Elections website at www.elections.il.gov. If there is a match in all four fields, the signature on file with the Secretary of State's database becomes the signature on the applicant's online voter registration application.
- The online system will then forward the application to the appropriate county clerk or board of election commissioners for processing. The election authority will determine if the applicant is already registered, or, if the name and address shall be entered on the list of registered voters in the jurisdiction. The election authority shall send a disposition notice to the applicant within five business days of receipt of the application.

VISIT THE ILLINOIS AND COOK COUNTY LEAGUE WEBSITES FOR
UP-TO-DATE INFORMATION ABOUT STATE AND LOCAL ELECTIONS AND VOTER REGISTRATION.
www.lwvil.org www.cookcounty.il.lwvnet.org

LWVE ENCOURAGES HOME ENERGY EFFICIENCY IMPROVEMENTS

– by Eleanor Revelle

League members attending the annual meeting in May voted to “support Evanston’s Climate Action Campaign to reduce Evanston’s greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 20% by 2016.”

The campaign to reduce emissions actually began in 2006 when Evanston signed the US Mayors Climate Protection Agreement, thereby pledging to achieve the GHG emissions-reduction target set in the Kyoto Protocol. For Evanston, this translated into a goal to reduce emissions 13% (relative to a 2005 baseline) by 2012 — an ambitious undertaking!

Thanks chiefly to community choice aggregation and the subsequent switch to 100% “green power” for residents and small businesses, Evanston reached its 13% goal in summer 2013. This is a huge accomplishment, but we know that much more remains to be done. To that end, Evanston’s sustainability community has set a next climate goal — a 20% reduction in emissions by 2016 — and developed a set of strategies — the Livability Plan — to achieve it. The Evanston City Council unanimously approved the new goal and the plan in May.

We achieved the first climate goal relatively easily — by voting “yes” on the community choice aggregation referendum in March 2012 and by encouraging the City Council to contract for



100% renewable electricity for aggregation participants. To reach the next goal, however, we each will have to be more actively engaged and make real changes in our daily lives.

The focus of the 20% Campaign is on improving the energy efficiency of our buildings and reducing transportation-related emissions. Let’s take a look at building efficiency.

Heating and cooling account for roughly half of a home’s total energy use. But proper air sealing and insulation will prevent outside air from penetrating the home and will keep conditioned indoor air from escaping. This will lower the cost of air conditioning the home in summer and heating it in winter. And it will move us closer to our 2016 GHG emissions-reduction goal.

Nicor Gas can help homeowners make these weatherization improvements and will provide an instant rebate for a significant portion of the cost. League members can help promote this opportunity by inviting friends and neighbors to a “house party” featuring a presentation about the program.

If you would like to (1) host (or co-host) a house party, or (2) be invited to a house party, or (3) get started right away on weatherizing your home, please contact Eleanor Revelle at 847.328.5330 or er@revelle.net.

OPEN HOUSE AT THE EVANSTON WATER PLANT

– by Cate Whitcomb

On Saturday, July 26 the Evanston Water Treatment Plant held an open house to celebrate 100 years of safe, reliable, filtered water. Several hundred citizens attended, hearing Mayor Elizabeth Tisdahl deliver opening remarks at 9:30 AM.

QUOTING FROM THE CITY’S WEBSITE: *The Evanston Water Treatment Plant is located on the shores of Lake Michigan, one of the world’s most valuable sources of fresh surface water. The treatment facility has the capacity to supply up to 108 million gallons per day (MGD) of pure drinking water. Our facility is municipally owned and operated and in addition to serving the residents of Evanston (population 74,239) we also supply water to the Village of Skokie and the Northwest Water Commission, which is comprised of the communities of Arlington Heights, Buffalo Grove, Palatine and Wheeling. The total population served is over 370,000!*

The tours offered of the treatment facility were fascinating, featuring the 24-7/365 center where a certified operator is always on duty, monitoring all aspects of the plant; the chemistry lab where water quality is continuously tested; the huge filtration tanks; the chemical delivery stations for chlorine,



fluoride and other chemicals; and the pumping stations that deliver water to Evanston and the nearby communities.

Although the City of Evanston began pumping water into homes in 1874 it wasn’t until 1914-- after a serious typhoid outbreak--that the City decided a filtration system to control for bacteria was needed. We are fortunate to live beside the largest supply of fresh water in the world, the Great Lakes, and even more fortunate to have the dedicated professional staff who make sure that we have fresh, clean water. The tour was a good reminder to never take this for granted!

LWVE CONTINUES IN STRONG FINANCIAL POSITION

– by Betty Hayford



LWVE closed the 2014 fiscal year in a strong financial position. On June 30, 2014, the League checking account held \$15,329, compared with \$10,679 a year earlier. The Education Fund held \$16,520, compared with \$20,321 on June 30, 2013.

In looking at the changes in both accounts, it is important to remember that during the past year the League held a fund raiser—the progressive dinner in May—that netted \$2,021 for the operating fund. The Education Fund dinner, held in alternate years, raised over \$11,000 in 2013.

The League’s financial health depends on the generosity of its members. In fiscal 2014, membership dues totaled \$12,227, greater than budgeted. But we sent more than \$9,000 in per Member Payments to the national, state and county leagues. Members contributed \$2,480 to the operating fund and \$1,025 to the Education Fund, providing resources for maintaining the office and producing the Intercom.

The Education Fund is an important resource for our voter service and education activities, and last year provided part of the costs for our celebration of 100 Years of Voting, part of our PMP payments, costs for voter service activities, and one-quarter of our office operations. In addition to the donations, we received \$457 from sale of our pamphlet for *100 Years of Voting*, and \$730 from the sales of our publication *This Is Evanston*.

SAVE THE DATE! 2015 EDUCATION FUND DINNER SATURDAY, APRIL 11

As noted in the Treasurer’s report, the biennial Education Fund dinner is a major fundraiser for the League. The planning committee is hard at work planning a fun evening. We are planning a departure from the usual “talking heads” format. Mark your calendars now and plan to “have a laugh with the League” on April 11!



MISSION STATEMENT

The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.



Thank you to our office staff!

(L-R) Judy Elsass, Betty Brugger, Joan Taylor & Katy Pendleton

LWVE OFFICE – AT YOUR SERVICE

– by Katy Pendleton

Although we don’t maintain regular office hours, a friendly crew of volunteers “staffs” the LWVE office in the Civic Center. Coordinated by Katy Pendleton, four volunteers staff the office by checking phone and e-mail from home. They do come into the office to check snail mail at least once a week. The president and other officers use the office computer and the phone system, and important documents are filed in the office. If League members wish to use the office for a meeting, contact the office by phone 847-859-7883 or e-mail LWVEvanston@gmail.com and the volunteer on duty will respond. You can also visit our website www.LWVE.org and click on the Contact Us tab.

MEMBERSHIP NEWS



I want to start by thanking all of you who have already renewed your membership! For those of you I have not heard from I will be sending you another membership form. The new directory will be ready this week so look for it soon in your mailbox! We are returning to the Farmers Market on Community Nonprofit Day on Saturday, September 20, both to recruit new members and to increase our visibility in the community. I think this is especially important as the election nears. I am always in need of volunteers to help pass out literature and tell people about LWVE. Call or e-mail me if you can help out at the Farmers Market, or can suggest other opportunities to introduce the League to the community.

Casey Christensen, VP of Membership
847.204.4688 or casey208@comcast.net

LT. GOV. SHEILA SIMON HIGHLIGHTS KEY ISSUES

– by Betty Hayford

LIEUTENANT-GOVERNOR SHEILA SIMON addressed Evanston residents, including League members, at the Evanston Public Library on August 6. She outlined some key developments in Springfield in recent months, and emphasized her commitment to transparent government and broad public participation.

Simon identified three key discussions this spring: the drive for a Fair Map in redistricting; development of a Statement of Economic Interest for elected officials; and a revised formula for funding public schools. She expressed strong support for the Fair Map effort, led by a consortium of civic groups including the Illinois LWV. Establishing more balanced and less partisan legislative districts would make elections more competitive and increase the prospect of more bi-partisan cooperation. Although the project fell short of getting the issue onto the November ballot, Simon believes that this effort will continue.

The Statement of Economic Interest would require elected state officials and certain appointed officials to disclose economic interests, and would increase public trust in these officials. The Senate passed a version of this statement, but it did not pass the House.

A bill to change the formula for funding public schools also passed the Senate, but not the House. This is an important step forward because it would direct state support for public schools based on need. Districts with a strong property tax base, such as Evanston, are opposed to this measure, but advocates for reform believe it would be a fairer use of public funds.

Simon, a member of LWV in Jackson County, emphasized the importance of making more information available about public expenditures and the difficulty of reducing state expenditures. She supports the movement toward a Graduated Rate Income Tax which would stabilize tax revenue and would be a fairer tax system. Overall, she made a strong case for public service and an active, informed electorate.



Cate Whitcomb (L), Lieutenant-Governor Sheila Simon (R)

LWVE CALENDAR OF EVENTS

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 20 10:00 am

Registration & coffee at 9:30 am

THE ROLE OF OAKTON COMMUNITY COLLEGE IN SERVING THE COMMUNITY

Dr. Margaret Lee, OCC President

OCC Skokie Campus, 7701 Lincoln Ave, Skokie

Details on page 7.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 27 10:00 am

CANDIDATE FORUM: 17th District State Reps

Wilmette Village Hall, 1200 Wilmette Ave, Wilmette

LAURA FINE (D, Incumbent)

KATHLEEN MYALLS (R)

Sponsored by Evanston, Glenview & Wilmette Leagues

LEAGUE-SPONSORED VOTER REGISTRATION AT

EVANSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY 1:00 – 3:00 pm

- **SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 20**
- **TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 23** *National Voter Registration Day*
- **SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 27**
- **SATURDAY OCTOBER 4**

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 4 — ELECTION DAY

Dates in **Voter Service Roundup** article page 3.

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 3 – SUNDAY, OCTOBER 5

LWV LAKE MICHIGAN REGION ANNUAL MEETING in Traverse City, MI

Visit www.lwvlmr.org for details

All programs are free unless otherwise noted.

Information 847-866-7844 or www.lwve.org and click on link to Calendar.

COOK COUNTY LEAGUE *continued from page 1*

initial property assessment and reviews appeals made to that office), the Board of Review, the County Clerk (who calculates the tax rates after all the taxing bodies have submitted their dollar levies and the total assessed value has been determined), and the Treasurer (who prints and sends out the bills, and then collects the taxes and distributes the monies to all the taxing bodies).

Besides on-time bills, Commissioner Patlak is also very proud of the fact that online appeals have been implemented since he was first elected in 2010. He stated that most single family homeowners probably don't need to hire an attorney to file an appeal. Commissioner Patlak also was happy to share that the Board is beginning the process of digitalizing its work flow, with a goal of digitalizing all files by August 2015.

This event is one of a series of LWVCC **"Lunch and Learn with the League"** presentations of Cook County officials and agencies; look for another next summer on a different aspect of Cook County government.

NATIONAL LWV CONVENTION: ENGAGING & ENERGIZING!

– by Casey Christensen

Eleanor Revelle and I represented the Evanston League earlier this summer at the LWVUS national convention held in Dallas, Texas. This was my first LWV convention and I must admit that there were times my mouth was open in amazement. Sessions began at 7:30 am and went until 10:30 pm! I had heard that the parliamentarians of the League were the best of the best. They did not disappoint! I did my best to keep up and then in the end focused on the times I had to vote.

Before our first plenary session we heard from a few notable women from Texas. Mayor Anise Parker of Houston was particularly inspiring: “We [government] need the League because you watch us, you engage us, and you hold us accountable!” I left the convention feeling very proud of the work of our League in Evanston. We do watch, engage, and hold our representatives accountable. I have been enriched and energized by my convention experience. I look forward to next summer’s state convention!

Editor’s note: For an impressive roundup of what the League is doing around the nation to protect voting rights, visit www.lwv.org. Like Casey, you will be enriched and energized!

OAKTON COMMUNITY COLLEGE AND THE COMMUNITY



– by Elizabeth Hayford

Margaret Lee, President of Oakton Community College, will meet with local leagues in the OCC district to speak on “The Role of Oakton Community College

in Serving the Community.” The meeting is set for Saturday, September 20, at 10:00 am, at the OCC Skokie Campus, 7701 Lincoln Avenue (registration and coffee at 9:30 am).

Dr. Lee will provide an overview of OCC programs and enrollment, and will describe current efforts to serve high-school dropouts or graduates who have not yet found their place in the work force. She will also discuss the complex funding of the college and how the college sets goals and assesses its success.

Margaret Lee has been President of Oakton Community College since 1995, and served as Vice President for Academic Affairs before that. She has a Doctorate and Master of Arts degree in English from the University of Chicago, where she was a Ford Foundation Fellow and a Woodrow Wilson Dissertation Scholar. She has been recognized by the Illinois Community College Trustees Association with its 2013 Advocacy Award for outstanding leadership in supporting the needs of students.

LWVE members and their guests are encouraged to attend and learn about one of our important resources.



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Where we live, how we live and who we share our lives with - they are all a matter of choice. Is there any reason to give up those choices as we get older? Keep your options open with North Shore Village, a member-driven organization for older adults who want to “age in place.”



Join us at an informal coffee to learn more.

Tommi Ferguson, Executive Director
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HELP EVANSTON LEAGUE CONSERVE RESOURCES

If you would prefer to receive the **INTERCOM** only on the internet, as a link to our LWVE website, please email LWVEPresident@gmail.com or call the League office at 847-859-7883 and leave a message telling us to stop sending you a printed copy. It will help us be more eco-friendly and reduce printing and mailing costs!



League of Women Voters® of Evanston

2100 Ridge Avenue in Evanston, IL 60201

SEPTEMBER - OCTOBER 2014

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Community Banking At Its Best



Just like members of a family, your bankers should be supportive and dependable—building lifetime relationships and caring about the well-being of the community.

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