



# THE INTERCOM

OCTOBER-NOVEMBER 2015

## LOOKING BACK, LOOKING FORWARD: STATE LEAGUE MARKS 95 YEARS OF CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

– by Cheryl Wollin

Attorney General Lisa Madigan was the first to wish “Happy 95th Birthday” to the League of Women Voters at the annual of the State of the State luncheon on September 16 at the Union League Club of Chicago. The featured speaker was Dr. Dianne Bystrom, director of the Carrie Chapman Catt Center for Women and Politics at Iowa State University, who spoke about “The Impact of Women on the ‘State of Our State’.” It was an inspiring afternoon.

Dr. Bystrom reminded us that Patience is a key ingredient to success, noting that women’s suffrage took 72 years of struggle before the 19th amendment was ratified on February 14, 1920. Carrie Chapman Catt was at it for 33 years! Every Valentine’s Day, the CCC Center sends out messages to women to get involved in politics.

Her talk was filled with statistics and analysis. Here are just a few to share:

- 1964** First year that women voted in larger numbers than men.
- 1980** The “Gender Gap” became a recognized political phenomenon.
- 2008** 55% of women, and 45% of men voted for Obama.
- 2015** Women now make up 19.4% of the U.S. Congress, the

highest ever. That puts us, however, at 76th place among the democratic nations. Guess who is #1? Rwanda, with 63% of women in leadership!

In Illinois, about 24% of state legislators are women, but we’ve been stuck at that number for years. We’ve been 7th in the nation since 2011. Does it matter? The research says it does. Women have a higher interest in health, education, social services, gun control, sexual equality in marriage, and legalized abortion.

To hearty applause, Dr. Bystrom asserted, **“Women are less likely to be corrupt or tolerate corruption.”**

Why don’t more women run for office? She cited three hurdles:

1. They feel less qualified (even if they’re not!)
2. They wait until their children are older.
3. They are dissuaded by stereotypes advanced by voters and the media.

Dr. Bystrom observed that there are fewer “over my dead body” candidates—women who run for election after their husband or father dies in office. She encouraged women to run for office, and to support women candidates by volunteering, voting, and donating!

## SCHAKOWSKY ADDRESSES VOTING RIGHTS, CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM, IRAN NUCLEAR AGREEMENT



- by Elizabeth Kinney

We were delighted to have 9th District Cong. Jan Schakowsky as the featured speaker at our August legislative luncheon on August 19 at the King Home.

Initially, she reminded us that 2015 marks the 50th anniversary of the Voting Rights Act. She recalled the moving commemorative gathering earlier this year in Selma, Alabama, with Cong. John Lewis leading a large group across the Edmund Pettus Bridge. While it was a bipartisan group, she does not expect many of the Republicans who attended to support the pending

L-R: Betty Hayford, Cong. Jan Schakowsky, Betty Brugger, Cheryl Wollin

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# CO-PRESIDENTS' LETTER

Dear League Friends,

Autumn is upon us, and the more leisurely days of summer are past. Many of us enjoyed summer travel or family get-togethers. The business of the city slowed down a bit. Now the routines of work and volunteer organizations and local government are back to active mode. The work of the League has also revved up, with much underway and much to prepare for.



Cheryl and I have chaired our first two meetings of the Board of Directors, and are pleased with the energy and enthusiasm around the table. We are looking forward to an interesting round of monthly programs this fall, and also to working on challenges our community is facing.

In August we hosted our successful annual Legislative Lunch featuring Cong. Jan Schakowsky. She brought us a report on both the accomplishments and the stalemates in our current Congress. Opportunities like this to meet with our elected officials reflect a core League activity: linking citizens to their government bodies and representatives.

We have no elections this fall, but electoral issues still require our attention. Jennifer O'Neil and her Deputy Registrar crew will be registering voters, at our usual venue of the Evanston Library and elsewhere. She is reaching out to other Evanston organizations to coordinate and strengthen our efforts. Illinois is making voter registration easier, but the work of registering and educating new voters is still needed.

Autumn in Evanston is city budget time, and our elected aldermen have begun to review numbers and priorities. Basic services, public safety, help for needy families, and maintaining the amenities that make Evanston so livable all compete for scarce public dollars. The League regularly observes council and committee meetings where these choices are debated, and posts Observer Reports on the League web site. League members are encouraged to read these reports, or to become observers themselves.

You have no doubt encountered League members asking for your signature to get an amendment to the Illinois Constitution on the ballot in 2016 to change the legislative redistricting process to a commission of independent experts who will devise more balanced legislative districts. Please sign a petition if you have not already done so, and encourage others to support this effort to make our legislators more accountable to their constituents!

The League can be a focus for study, for action, and for good fellowship. We are initiating a new framework for these multiple goals with a set of League Salons in January – small groups coming together for conversation and consideration of methods of addressing important issues. We have identified three topics for initial meetings to brighten the winter gloom and perhaps lead to action. Read more in this issue and contact the office, or the hosts, if you are interested.

Lots to celebrate and much to do! Let us know how you want to be involved!

*Betty & Cheryl*

ehayford@gmail.com  
cherylwollin@sbcglobal.net

## League of Women Voters® of Evanston

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847-859-7883 [LWVEvanston@gmail.com](mailto:LWVEvanston@gmail.com)  
[www.lwve.org](http://www.lwve.org)

### 2015-2016 ELECTED OFFICERS

<b>Co-Presidents</b>	Betty Hayford Cheryl Wollin
<b>VP Membership</b>	Kathy Tate-Bradish
<b>Treasurer</b>	Betty Brugger
<b>Secretary</b>	Joan Lakebrink

### 2015-2016 ELECTED DIRECTORS

#### Local Government – Observer Corps

Jessie Feldman

#### Voter Service – Registration

Jennifer O'Neil

#### Voter Service – Forums

Julianne Dieterich

#### Development Chair

Karen Hunt

#### Members at Large

Gloria Callaci Ellen Browne

#### Nominating Committee Chair

Ellen Browne

### OFF-BOARD APPOINTMENTS

#### Office Coordinator

Katy Compere Pendleton

#### Webmaster Mary Lewis

#### Intercom Newsletter

Helen Gagel Julie Winsberg

### THE INTERCOM

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

## 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.



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# REPORT FROM THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DIVISION MANAGER

– by Ashley Scotting

Johanna Leonard, a long-time Evanston resident who is now the Economic Development Division Manager for the City spoke at the September 18 luncheon. She explained the many facets of economic development and what the City has been working on to strengthen the local economy. Ms. Leonard received her masters in urban planning at UIC. Her passion for economic development grew from the realization that so many individuals working in city government wanted to build new things. This surprised her, as there are so many good things in Evanston that could simply be improved upon.



Economic Development Committee reviews the applicant's credentials very similarly to the way a bank would, including: review of the business plan, cash flow, capacity to repay, and so on. The City requires collateral to secure the loan, and makes intelligent decisions on the details of loans they provide to particular businesses.

The storefront improvement plan is another popular program, through which the City provides a 50/50 match

to help retailers re-do their facades. Recently, the committee has expanded the program to a 50/50 match for the interior of qualifying retail spaces. This excludes restaurants in the downtown area, but is another excellent program available to help attract more business to the city.

As division manager, she staffs the Economic Development Committee of the City Council, which is responsible for implementing the council's vision statement that stresses the importance of "business attraction, business retention, commercial revitalization and marketing of economic development." To attract businesses to the city, the committee focuses on assisting and encouraging entrepreneurship and start-ups. For business retention, the committee has focused on the improvement of businesses already located in the city such as health care.

The City has also rolled out a new program that provides training to individuals in search of jobs as well as businesses looking for employees. The program is available to local residents, which helps Evanston to keep its businesses and workers within the city, thus stimulating the Evanston economy. (Employees typically spend \$120 per week in the area where they work.)

Evanston offers several programs to further economic development. One is gap financing, in which the City acts as the bank of last resort for individuals who have difficulty obtaining a traditional loan. Of course there is a list of criteria a business must fulfill in order to be approved for financing, but it's a very helpful option for the City to provide. Leonard's advice on obtaining a last-resort loan is to be timely, organized, and thoughtful. The

Looking ahead, Leonard said the Economic Development Committee anticipates changes that will provide benefits for all businesses and residents, such as streetscape improvements like new benches and new trees.

*Note: The Economic Development Committee meets the 4th Wednesday of the month at 7:30 pm at the Morton Civic Center. Check the City website for agendas, minutes, and any changes in the schedule.*



## TIME FOR MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS

Summer and fall is the time for membership renewals, and many members have responded. Some members wait for a reminder letter, and this year the reminders have not yet been sent. Why? Because LWVUS is installing a new database, the source

of our mailing list, and the whole process has been delayed. The "official" database may not be ready for several months, but we will be working around this technology glitch and sending our letters this month.

In the meantime, if you want to renew, you can go to the website [www.lwve.org] and print a renewal form to send in, or renew on line through PayPal. When you receive a renewal letter, please do renew. We are planning important league activities this year, many of which are outlined in this issue of the Intercom, and your participation is welcome.

Many new members have joined in the past six months. We welcome them and look forward to connecting names and faces at our membership events, monthly programs or other league occasions.

Two membership events are planned for this fall. First, a new member coffee at the home of Kathy Tate-Bradish, 10 AM Saturday, October 24. Opportunities with the league will be presented, and continuing members are encouraged to attend as well.

In December we will have a reception for new and continuing members at the John Evans Center, 1800 Sheridan Road, on Thursday, December 10, from 6 to 8 PM. There will be a program and lots of time for conversation, meeting new members, and holiday refreshments.

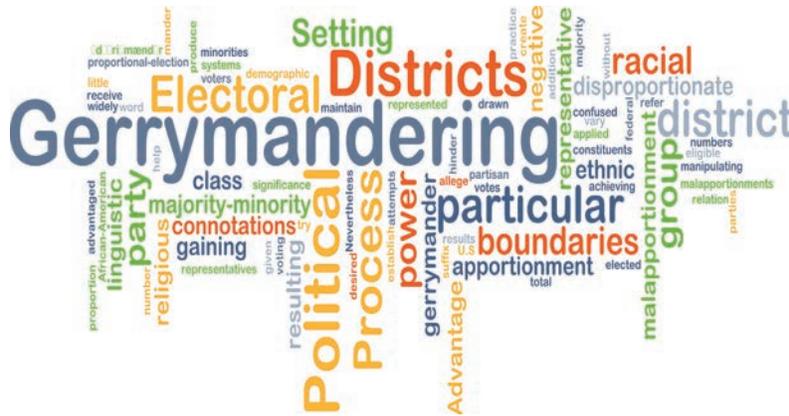
For more information, contact Kathy Tate-Bradish, membership chair, at [Kathy.tate.bradish@gmail.com](mailto:Kathy.tate.bradish@gmail.com)

# ARE YOU TIRED OF GERRYMANDERING? SIGN THE PETITION!

– by Betty Hayford

LWVIL is working with other civic groups throughout the state to put a constitutional amendment on the November 2016 ballot to transfer the power to redistrict from the politicians to a non-partisan independent commission. LWV Evanston members are circulating petitions to support this effort.

Taking the power to redraw legislative districts after a decennial census away from legislative leaders will make the process more transparent and fair. Districts will be drawn respecting geographic integrity of local government units, social and economic communities, and racial or language minorities. No longer will legislators be able to design districts that suit their electoral needs. This is a drive for representative government that has long been a League priority.



A similar proposal in 2014 was not allowed on the ballot. Changes have been made in the wording of the amendment to respond to some judicial concerns. The process of gathering signatures has been improved to be sure sufficient valid signatures are collected.

300,000 valid signatures are needed to get a proposed amendment on the ballot. The Independent Map Amendment coalition is aiming for 500,000 signatures by October 31 to make sure the drive will go forward. In early September, 250,000 signatures had been achieved and the work continues.

If you would like to sign a petition, contact a member of the Board or your co-presidents, Betty Hayford or Cheryl Wollin [ehayford@gmail.com](mailto:ehayford@gmail.com) or [cherylwollin@sbcglobal.net](mailto:cherylwollin@sbcglobal.net)

## 2015 LWVIL MODERATOR TRAINING SESSIONS NONPARTISAN, BALANCED AND PROUD OF IT!

Saturday, October 17 & Saturday, October 24

2016 is poised to be an exciting election year in Illinois League members - learn or refresh your memory on best practices to be an effective debate/forum moderator.

The League of Women of Illinois is sponsoring two training sessions for anyone interested in becoming a candidate forum or debate moderator.

On **SATURDAY, OCTOBER 17**, the League of Women Voters of Lake County is hosting a training session:  
Location: Patty Turner Center, 375 Elm Street, Deerfield  
Time: 10:30 AM to 2:00 PM  
There will be a small charge for lunch.  
The deadline to sign up for this training is October 10.  
RSVP: Please e-mail Mary Schaafsma [marys@lwvil.org](mailto:marys@lwvil.org)

On **SATURDAY, OCTOBER 24**, the League of Women Voters of Wheaton is hosting a training session:  
Location: Wheaton Park District Community Center, 1777 South Blanchard Street, Wheaton  
Time: 8:30 AM to 12 NOON  
Beverages and muffins will be provided.  
The deadline to sign up for this training is October 17.  
RSVP: Please e-mail Mary Schaafsma [marys@lwvil.org](mailto:marys@lwvil.org)

Any League wishing to host a moderator training session can contact Irene Pritzker at [voterservice@lwvil.org](mailto:voterservice@lwvil.org). A minimum of 10 participants is required. LWVIL asks a hosting local League to take responsibility for room and snack/lunch arrangements. The training would be open other leagues in the area to ensure sufficient enrollment.



Cheryl Wollin and Betty Bruegger signed up new voters at the Evanston Public Library on National Voter Registration Day.

# THE LWVUS CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT STUDY

– by Cheryl Wollin

The national LWV has proposed studies of Constitutional Amendments and Money in Politics. Questions for the first part of the study, on the amendment process, have been listed on the national website. The questions on Money in Politics are not available yet, but will be listed later this fall. The Evanston LWV is partnering with other North Shore Leagues on this study, including Glenview/Glencoe (chairs), Wilmette, Winnetka/Kenilworth, Highland Park, Deerfield, and Lake Forest. The organizing committee met on September 9 to allocate the national questions, devise a schedule of meetings, and decide on how individual leagues will conduct consensus.

The Constitutional Amendment Study Guide is available on the LWVUS website. It is 24 pages, and lists the pros and cons of each of the question, along with pertinent resources to aid discussion. There are three parts:

- PART I** Consideration for Evaluating Constitutional Amendment Process
- PART II** Aspects of an Article V Constitutional Convention
- PART III** Balancing Questions

A complete presentation of the material for this study will be presented once, on **OCTOBER 28TH, 12 NOON at the TAKIFF CENTER**, 999 Green Bay Road, Glencoe. Some leagues will then separate and hold their own consensus meetings there. However, Evanston will have their own consensus meeting at the regular November 19th board meeting. All members are invited to both meetings. Results of our consensus are due to LWVUS by January.



## LWVCC PRESENTS INDEPENDENT INSPECTOR GENERAL



– by Betty Hayford

On August 6, LWV Cook County sponsored its annual Lunch and Learn event featuring Patrick Blanchard, who has held the office of Independent Inspector General since its creation in 2007. Blanchard and his office are charged to detect, deter and prevent corruption, fraud, waste, mismanagement, unlawful political discrimination and misconduct in Cook County government.

The office was created as part of the response to the Shakman Decree, a judicial ruling that identified pervasive

political interference in hiring and firing in Cook County and established procedures to create open and fair hiring practices. In his presentation to the League, Blanchard stressed the importance of the independence of his office, both in selection of staff and issues to investigate. The process relies on the willingness of Cook County employees to report concerns, supported by the power of the IIG to prevent retaliation. Investigations since Blanchard's appointment have resulted in judgments of millions of dollars paid to employees hurt by political discrimination.

While Cook County still has a reputation for corruption, Blanchard believes that the climate has changed in the past five years and corruption and fraud are no longer casually accepted. He has gradually built up his office to the current 16 investigators who can issue subpoenas and compel testimony or the production of documents in connection with an investigation.

Blanchard emphasized the importance of transparency in government operations, and applauded the League's efforts to hold government offices accountable. His appearance was one in a series of LWVCC meetings with elected officials and other key figures to explain the work of their offices and their role in Cook County government.

## SCHAKOWSKY ADDRESSES VOTING RIGHTS

continued from page 1

Voting Rights Act legislation which would, among other things, reinstate pre-clearance requirements before changes are made in voter registration rules. She estimated that, in the wake of the Supreme Court ruling invalidating key provisions 1965 Voting Rights Act, about 600,000 people in Texas were deprived of their right to vote in the last election. Recently, however, the Supreme Court overturned the Texas restrictions and made clear that plaintiffs no longer need to prove intent--it is enough to show the effect of restrictions on voting. The issue areas for restrictions on the right to vote include: hours of voting, early voting and the number of polling places.

Schakowsky lamented the fact that the United States electoral system is being dominated by smaller and smaller groups of individuals. She noted that, according to the New York Times, about 400 families have provided one-half of the political campaign cash.

She also spoke about the criminal justice system, noting that the US has 5% of the world's population but over 25% of the world's prisoners. She stated that the prisoners were disproportionately black and brown. She pointed out that a felony conviction has long lasting effects. For example, it may preclude access to public housing and in some states, convicted felons, even after serving their time, cannot vote (this is not the case in Illinois). She believes that the "war on drugs" has led to many long-term incarcerations. She supports HR 920 (Smarter Sentencing Act) which reduces penalties, reduces mandatory minimums and has bipartisan support. Another bill which she supports is the "Justice Safety Valve Act," also bipartisan, which focuses on reducing penalties for non-violent offenders and providing adequate mental health services to prisoners.

With regard to the budget, Schakowsky noted that the top 1% in the United States have as much wealth as 90% of the population. So far this year, only 6 of 12 appropriations bills have been passed. She stated that the fight over funding for Planned Parenthood may lead to a government shut-down in the fall.

Finally, she spoke about the Iran nuclear agreement. She pointed out that it took four years to negotiate, was carefully crafted and will peacefully prevent Iran from having nuclear weapons for a long time. She fully supports the proposed agreement and suggests asking opponents – what is the alternative? Schakowsky noted that all of the world's experts state that there has never been a more robust inspection system. She believes that the United States' ability to be a world leader is on the line and stated that it would be unwise for Congress to overrule the President on this issue.

## LWVE CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### MONTHLY PROGRAMS

#### OCTOBER 20, TUESDAY ~ 12 NOON

Patrick Keenan-Devlin on the work of the James B. Moran Center for Youth Advocacy.

The King Home, 1555 Oak Avenue, Evanston

#### NOVEMBER 12, THURSDAY ~ 12 NOON

Panel on Fair and Affordable Housing in Evanston.

The King Home, 1555 Oak Avenue, Evanston

### MEMBERSHIP PROGRAMS

#### OCTOBER 24, SATURDAY ~ 10 AM

**New Member Reception** — old members welcome — held at home of Kathy Tate-Braddish\*

#### DECEMBER 10, THURSDAY ~ 6 TO 8 PM

**New Member/Old Member Evening Reception**

John Evans Center, 1800 Sheridan Road, Evanston

### DISCUSSION/ACTIVITY EVENTS

#### OCTOBER 27, TUESDAY ~ 7 PM

**Voter Service Committee Meeting** — all are welcome. Held at the home of Jennifer O'Neil\*

#### OCTOBER 28, WEDNESDAY ~ 12 NOON

LWVUS Constitutional Amendment Study Presentations & Discussion with other North Shore leagues.

Takiff Center, 999 Green Bay Road, Glencoe

*More information on page 5*

#### NOVEMBER 19, THURSDAY ~ 7 PM

LWVEvanston Constitutional Amendment Study consensus meeting, during regular Board Meeting.

The King Home, 1555 Oak Avenue, Evanston

\* For location details contact: [LWVEvanston@gmail.com](mailto:LWVEvanston@gmail.com) or 847-859-7883

### UPCOMING LWVE BOARD MEETINGS

#### THURSDAYS, OCTOBER 15 & NOVEMBER 19 ~ 7 PM

Our Board Meetings are held the third Thursday of every month, with some exceptions. All members are welcome to attend. The King Home, 1555 Oak Avenue, Evanston

For more information **847-859-7883**  
or [www.lwve.org](http://www.lwve.org) and click on link to Calendar



# LET'S TALK! COME TO THE LEAGUE SALON

– by Betty Hayford & Elizabeth Kinney

**Salon: A periodic gathering of people of social or intellectual distinction.** [The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language—Fifth Edition]

The League of Women Voters has long provided opportunities for members to gather to exchange views on vital political or social issues. LWVEvanston is reviving this tradition in January with a series of informal meetings to share views, explore concerns, consider actions, and expand friendships.



Initial planning has identified three topics of local and/or national interest.

- Evanston's clean power and climate change action plans. Eleanor Revelle will be the facilitator at the meeting at the home of Elizabeth Kinney, on **Saturday, January 16, 2016 at 3:00 PM.**
- Fair and affordable housing and options for increasing opportunities in Evanston. Jennifer O'Neil will be the facilitator of the meeting to be held at her home on **Thursday, January 12, 2016 at 7:00 PM.**
- Evanston government and how to observe and influence its actions. Jessie Feldman and Betty Hayford will facilitate this topic at the home of Sue Brenner, date to be announced.

Attendees will bring concerns and questions, and the conversation may lead to plans for further meetings, opportunities for learning more, or ideas for actions to bring about change. The Board hopes these discussions will lead to deeper interest in the topic and new perspectives on how individuals can become engaged with the league.

More information about meeting plans will be forthcoming in the next few months. In order to gauge interest and attendance, please email [LWVEvanston@gmail.com](mailto:LWVEvanston@gmail.com) or call the League at 847-859-7883 to express your interest **by November 15th.** You will be contacted by the hostess with more details.

## JUSTICE SUMMIT TO CONVENE AT OAKTON ON OCTOBER 11



Co-president Cheryl Wollin reminds us that *"The Evanston LWV is a proud supporter of the Justice Project and the upcoming Justice Summit,"* a day of teach-in style workshops on best practices for building diverse communities, including:

- The Safe Community: Promoting Respect, Reducing Violence
- Open to All: Housing and Economic Justice
- Inclusive Schools and Education Equity
- Visioning Together for the Sustainable, Welcoming Community
- Strengthening Communities: Creative Conflict Resolution

Please join us on Sunday, October 11th, from 11:30 AM to 5:30 PM. at the Skokie Campus of Oakton Community College. **This is a free event.**

For more information, and to register, visit: [tinyurl.com/p6dpc4k](http://tinyurl.com/p6dpc4k)



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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](mailto: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, Evanston, IL 60201

**OCTOBER - NOVEMBER 2015**

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