

LWV-LFLB Board Report 2012-2013

What a year this was! Our activities attracted both a record number of people and rave reviews. Everyone should be very proud of his or her contribution to the League's successful year.

With our year beginning in July, there is nothing like the Lake Bluff July 4th parade to rev up our engines. Once again Ann Grant and Mary Mathews enjoyed the beautiful day in Carol Russ' convertible and waved to thousands who lined the parade route. We continued our momentum into August with Liz Bradner, Happie Datt, and Cindy Morehead joining Stephanie Victor in her convertible for the Lake Forest Day Parade. Being part of our communities' celebrations and having fun is a great way to spend the summer.

One of the benefits of League membership is hearing and sharing experiences with interesting, involved people. Our member, Happie Datt returned from a tour of duty with the Peace Corps. In August, she shared some anecdotes and slides about the Republic of Macedonia.

Carol Russ enjoyed a different type of experience. Carol, going beyond the call of duty, donned a hardhat to tour U.S. Steel plant in Gary, Indiana as part of the Lake Michigan LWV annual meeting. Carol always provides us first-hand information what our sister league is doing.

We kicked off the fall season with our annual membership event. The "Women in Government" reception hosted by our retiring state senator Susan Garrett was revealing and enjoyable. Four of our members, who have served in different government roles, disclosed remarkable stories. Peg Determan, Roycealee Wood, Carol Russ, and Susan Garrett are wonderful role models. We need more like them. Members really appreciated Susan's hospitality and Linda Bartmes' refreshments.

In September, Stephanie Victor arranged voter registration drives, and expanded our outreach by setting up in two high-profile business locations. Tina O'Connor and Liz Bradner were two of the dependable voter registrars who helped out. On Sept. 25, our League also participated in the National Voter Registration Drive, an effort nationwide to remind people to take the necessary steps to be eligible to vote in November by completing the necessary registration forms.

October will be remembered for a long time. Over 600 people attended our candidate debate held on Sunday, Oct. 14, 2012 at Lake Forest High School. Under Ann Grant's leadership, our League provided the only live debate in the 10th Congressional District between Bob Dold and Brad Schneider. Debates for the state senate and state representative seats and the Lake County board races also were part of the day. Ann coordinated with LWV-Highland Park and LWV-Deerfield, along with the Union League Club of Chicago, Lake Forest High School, and Patch media as co-sponsors.

A week later, on Sunday, Oct. 21 was another set of debates. Our long time partner the Lake Forest - Lake Bluff Senior Center, along with LWV-HP, LWV-Df, and Patch co-sponsored the four debates for the Lake County Administrative offices: Circuit Court Clerk, Coroner, Recorder of Deeds, and State's Attorney. Controversy with some of the races drew people to the event. Within eight days, with 21 candidates participating, and unbelievable logistics, we were able to provide these two sets of important candidate debates only because of the fantastic help of our many volunteer members.

In November, League members took part in the LWV-Illinois study on State Pension Reform. After a summer of research, Tracy Burns, with the help of her committee, directed a two step process. On Nov. 1, "A Pension Primer: Status and Solutions" was presented at the Gorton Community Center and co-sponsored by AAUW. Two superb speakers, Amanda Kass from the Center for Tax and Budget Accountability and Robert Riley, partner with Robbins Schwartz, explained the

problems with the public pension system in Illinois and suggested possible solutions. Refreshments softened the disheartening assessment. A week later, at her home, Tracy led members through the questions provided by LWVIL and helped us reach consensus. Our report was sent to LWVIL and used to form a new state position - Illinois Pension Reform. Contributions by committee members: Tom Meskel, Joan Kaltsas, Happie Datt, Sandy Hart, Carol Russ, Lisa Dietrich, and Jane Partridge, were invaluable for our participation.

The annual Holiday Luncheon not only is our fundraiser but also gives members a chance to enjoy each other's company with good food and entertainment. Linda Bartmes organized an excellent luncheon with The Grille on Laurel as the setting, and Jenny Riddle, a book dramatist, providing lively entertainment. Jenny's four short skits about "Famous First Ladies" were amusing and enlightening. Leigh Ann Charlot's help with registration and directory distribution was much appreciated. Once again, members were able to complete some holiday shopping with a selection of books that Lisa Dietrich supplied from the Lake Forest Book Store.

Not all was fun in December, serious work also beckoned. Liz Bradner convened an interest group at her home to deal with gun violence prevention. Participants in the initial meeting were: Tom Meskel, Jane Partridge, Steve Potsic, Diane Sanderson, Dianne Schleeper, Kathleen Wasik, and Mary Mathews. This group took a number of measures. A letter-to-the-editor written by Steve Potsic was published and used as a template by other Leagues throughout the state. Members contacted by phone, mail, email and in-person, both federal and state legislators. Other members have joined the group and continue to work for gun 'sense' legislation.

In January, Happie Datt again provided an international educational opportunity for members. As Happie was volunteering as a docent at the Field Museum, she arranged a tour of the "Maharaja: The Splendor of India's Royal Courts". The exhibit truly was splendid and members appreciated the special tour.

Cindy Morehead, Liz Bradner, Jane Partridge, and Mary Mathews joined over 170 other Leaguers from all over the state at the LWVIL Issues Briefing in Chicago. This annual day-long event gives local League members an opportunity to learn firsthand what the state League is doing.

February's public program "Nutritious or Malicious?" attracted an audience of over 150 people, many of them students. Happie Datt organized the event, while Sandy Hart and Steve Potsic contacted the two speakers, Bill Kurtis, renowned journalist, and Dr. Ruchi Gupta, allergy researcher. They spoke about some of the problems with modern farming practices and possible allergies. The program was co-sponsored with Lake Forest Open Lands and moderated by Melanie Rummel. Numerous volunteers including Tracy Burns, Midge Heurich, Lori Reszutek, Marilyn Shineflug, Amelia Snoblin, Nicki Snoblin, along with LF High School students helped make the day successful. For the first time, we charged a small fee to help offset the cost of the program which was held in the auditorium of Gorton Community Center.

Later in the month, Carol Russ graciously opened her house for our annual Valentine's Day tea/Program Planning meeting. Linda Bartmes and Stephanie Victor provided refreshments which enabled 23 members to carry on animated discussions about our state and local positions and recommend focus items for next year.

A week later, members from our League along with members from LWV-Highland Park, LWV-Deerfield, and LWV-Glencoe interviewed our legislators. Liz Bradner visited Congressman Brad Schneider; Kathleen Wasik, Lori Reszutek and Mary Mathews met with State Senator Julie Morrison; and Stephanie Victor, Nicki Snoblin, and Jane Partridge met with State Representative Scott Drury. All found the meetings to be very informative. Interview reports were sent to LWVIL.

In March, we had another round of candidate debates. This time for local municipal races. Again, Ann Grant worked logistical miracles. There were 42 candidates, 2 sites, 2 dates, 7 debates, 3 moderators, and lots of administrative details. On Sunday, March 3, candidates for Lake Bluff School District 65, L.B. Library, and L.B. Village Trustee made their cases at the Lake Bluff Recreation Center. On Sunday, March 10 candidates for Lake Forest School District. 67, L.F. High

School District 115, and Shields Township met in the Lake Forest Library. AAUW co-sponsored. Many thanks to our Voter Services volunteers in October and March including Liz Bradner, Mary Jane Brady, Happie Datt, Peg Determan, Lisa Dietrich, Ann Hamlin, Cindy Morehead, Tina O'Connor, Jane Partridge, Trude Roselle, Carol Russ, Jan Schnobrich, Alice Sievert, Marilyn Shineflug, Stephanie Victor, Kathleen Wasik, and Mary Mathews.

Healthcare has long been a focus issue at all levels of League. In March, Lori Reszutek hosted a healthcare interest group meeting. Members determined a public program about the Affordable Care Act (Obamacare) would provide a timely service to the community. In April, Julie Hamos, Director of Illinois Dept. of Healthcare and Family Services, and Dr. Steven Potsic, Public Health Consultant and League member, described many pertinent details in "Obamacare, Just the Facts!". The program held in the CROYA auditorium drew a full and diverse crowd of over 50 people. Thanks to moderator Joan Kaltsas, and to the involvement by Sandy Hart, Lisa Dietrich, Lori Reszutek, Ann Sorensen, Jane Partridge, Mary Mathews, Linda Bartmes, Steve Potsic, Tina O'Connor, and Liz Bradner.

Recently, Bev Nelson hosted a Campaign Finance Reform interest group meeting. Kathy Ryg and Susan Garrett have offered to contact first-rate speakers for a program in the fall. This should generate a lively discussion.

At the end of May, Stephanie Victor will present "Know Your Government" Award certificates to three 8th grade students at Deer Path Middle School. A plaque at the school acknowledges those who have demonstrated an exceptional understanding of our democratic system.

Throughout the year we spoke out about issues with letters-to-the-editor or opinion articles to the Lake Forester, TribLocal, Patch and Gazebo News. We also monitored government bodies regarding some of our focus items. We must remain vigilant and when necessary, alert the public.

Our public efforts are only possible because of all the continuous work done behind-the-scenes. Liz Bradner accounts for both our general operating funds and tax-deductible donations to the education fund. Cindy Morehead keeps our official records in good order. Linda Bartmes is our liaison with LWV-Lake County. Carol Russ puts together the witty e-alerts. Diane Sanderson is the grammar guru editor for our quarterly newsletter *League Lines*. Stan Sanderson recently volunteered to be the publisher and put out his first edition. Nicki Snoblin is our matchless webmaster and graphic designer, responsible for designing our community signs, our ads in Gazebo News and Patch, and on LFTV.

Over the last few months many have helped with preparations for the Annual Meeting. Kitty Cole is hosting the event at her home. Joan Kaltsas and Diane Sanderson went through the Bylaws; Happie Datt and Liz Bradner worked on the Budget; and Stephanie Victor updated the Nonpartisan Policy. The Nominating Committee of Linda Bartmes, Ann Grant, Jeanne Kearby, Carol Russ and Marilyn Shineflug has proposed a slate.

Even though this year is drawing to a close, more plans are underway. Stay tuned. Watch for email alerts, quarterly newsletters, and colorful postcard invitations. Go to our website <http://lwv-lflb.org> or our Facebook page - League of Women Voters - Lake Forest/Lake Bluff for current information. If you missed any of our programs or want to see them again, they were videotaped and can be seen on our website.

If you have any questions or suggestions, please give Jane or Mary a call. Or if you would like to play a more active role, let us know. Thanks to all our supporters and volunteers for this great year.

Respectfully submitted,

Jane Partridge and Mary Mathews