



The League of Women Voters of Elmhurst

Founded in 1932

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Shop Talk

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

This is a partial list of events the coming year. Please check future editions of Shop Talk and our website, www.lwvelmhurst.org for the latest events and activities.

July 25	6 - 8:30pm	Eco Vehicles at Cool Cars Under the Stars Organized by the Cool Cities Coalition, Downtown Elmhurst
September 13	7pm	Should Elected Officials Hold Dual Offices? Speaker to be announced; Elmhurst Public Library
September 28-29		Lake Michigan League of Women Voters Annual Meeting in Indiana (LWV Elmhurst is a member.)
September 29	9am-noon	Voter Registration at Elmhurst Public Library
October 7	1pm - 4pm	Voter Registration at Elmhurst Public Library
October 9	5pm - 8pm	Voter Registration at Elmhurst Public Library Last Day to Register for November elections!
October 18	7pm	Illinois Public Pensions Systems Ralph Martire, Center for Tax & Budget Accountability at Wilder Mansion
November 6	6am - 7pm	General Election - Federal, State, and County races
November 16		IL Pension Reform study consensus forms due
November 29	7pm	Improving County Government: Dan Cronin, DuPage County Board President, at Elmhurst Public Library
January 10	6:30pm	Voter Registrar Training & Re-certification Elmhurst Public Library
February 9		LWVIL Annual Issues Briefing in Chicago
April 9		Consolidated Election for Township, Municipal, Park District, Library District, School District and Fire District officials

LWVIL PENSION REFORM STUDY

Are you interested in this study? We would like to start up a committee by the end of summer to complete the work on time. A public program on the issue is scheduled for October. Please contact Susan Rose to participate at president@lwvelmhurst.org.

Study Origins

In 2010, growing concerns over state fiscal policy - and underfunded state pension obligations in particular - led the LWVIL Issues Committee to recommend a study that was subsequently adopted at our convention last June. The goal is to develop a position on sustainable pension systems appropriate for Illinois and reforms that would be consistent with the Illinois Constitution.

Study Timeline

June 2011: Study adopted.

September 2011 - June 2012: Committee researched and compiled study materials.

July 2012: Study material distributed

July 2012 - November 2012: Local League Study and Consensus process.

November 16, 2012: Consensus Deadline.

November 16, 2012 - early January 2013: Committee analyzes local League responses and, if consensus is found, drafts a position to submit to the LWVIL Board.

January 12, 2013: LWVIL Board verifies that consensus has been reached and approves the final position. LWVIL may then take advocate on state pension issues.

Scope and Focus

The study is limited to the five Illinois state public pension systems:

- General Assembly Retirement Plan (GARS)
- Judges' Retirement System (JRS)
- State Employees' Retirement System (SERS)
- State Universities Retirement System (SURS);
- Teachers' Retirement System (TRS)

Health care benefits for retired state employees are **not** included in this study.

Potential changes that could be applied to the five systems are to be considered in the context of their potential impact(s) on the following key stakeholders:

- Current employees in the five state pension systems, hired before January 1, 2011
- Public school districts, public community colleges, and public universities
- Retirees currently in the five state systems
- All retirees who live in Illinois
- Illinois taxpayers
- The State of Illinois (government)

Study Packets

The complete study packet is available on the LWVIL website:

<http://www.lwvil.org/IllinoisPensionStudy.asp>

If you need a hard copy, please contact Laura Kratz at shoptalk@lwvelmhurst.org

Process for Local Leagues

Study: In addition to using the materials provided, Leagues are encouraged to hold public programs and/or study meetings to explore the issue. (LWV Elmhurst has a program scheduled for October 18th.)

Consensus meetings: Members discuss potential changes to the systems in the context of their impact(s) on the stakeholders listed. Members are then asked to reach consensus on which changes, if any, they would like the LWVIL to advocate for and/or against.

Report consensus results to LWVIL. The completed form be mailed to the LWVIL office, postmarked by November 16, 2012.

VOTER REGISTRATION - *Maria Hirsch*

Voter Registration for November Elections

Planning is underway for Voter Registration events for the fall General Election. This certainly is shaping up to be an interesting election, and our goal is to make sure everyone has a chance to have their voice heard. Our registration events at the Elmhurst Public Library are already scheduled with the dates and times listed in the Events Calendar. Work is under way to register commuters at the Metra station in Elmhurst, and of course, get our high school seniors

registered as well. We also plan to contact senior residence homes in the area to see if we can assist in updating their residents' registrations. If you have an idea for a new audience, or have a group that would like to invite us in to register, please let me know. Also, if you are interested in becoming a deputy registrar to assist in our voter registration efforts, I will be happy to get you signed up and trained. Contact me at either mhirsch7@comcast.net.

About Deputy Registrars

As a non-partisan, not for profit organization, the League of Women Voters is registered with the Election Commission and helps extend their reach in providing voter registration services to the public. In our local league, we have 17 trained registrars who volunteer to staff all these events. All deputy registrar certifications are good for 2 years and will expire on 11/30/2012; however, the DuPage Election Commission ex-

tends a grace period through the end of the calendar year. We have already planned a recertification session for Thursday January 10th at 6:30pm, prior to our monthly public meeting. This 30 minute session will provide a training update and any new information for registrars. Once we are re-certified on January 10th, we'll be ready to go again for the consolidated election in April.

MEMBERSHIP - *Sue Williams*

Forgot to pay your membership dues?

You may pay online at
www.lwvelmhurst.org

Or mail your dues to:

LWV
P.O. Box 12
Elmhurst, IL 60126

Our *Directory and Yearbook* will be available at our September meeting so please have your dues paid by the end of July to be included in the 2012-2013 edition. Changes to your current information may be sent to membership@lwvelmhurst.org

COOL CITIES - *Sue Williams*

Wednesday, July 25th is Mustang and Eco Car Night in downtown Elmhurst from 6 - 8:30pm. Are you curious about the new eco cars? These dealers will be showing us their "green" vehicles:

McGrath Lexus

Al Piemonte Nissan

Loeber Motors

Castle Chevrolet

Roesch Ford

Honda on Grand

Elmhurst Toyota

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF ELMHURST 2011-2012
Actual Results vs. Budget (July 1, 2011 through June 30, 2012)

	FULL YEAR	Through 6/30/12	
INCOME	BUDGET	ACTUAL	Difference
Dues	3900	3098.80	-801.20
Finance Drive	2100	2110.00	10.00
Interest	10	0.07	-9.93
Calendar Sales	25		-25.00
Ticket Sales	100		-100.00
Other Income	0		0.00
Window Cling Sales	25		-25.00
Grants	0		0.00
LWVIL Sharing	400	240.75	-159.25
Donations	508	530.57	22.57
TOTAL INCOME	7068	5980.19	-1087.81
EXPENDITURES			
Board & Administration			
Board Tools	60	104.56	-44.56
Finance Drive	75	60.43	14.57
Membership	150	148.59	1.41
Miscellaneous	0		0.00
President	25		25.00
1st VP Supplies	10		10.00
2nd VP Supplies	10		10.00
Public Relations	10		10.00
Secretary	20		20.00
Treasurer	25	35.20	-10.20
Total	385	348.78	36.22
Delegate Expenses			
Convention	2000	1292.02	707.98
Seminars & Conferences	500	460.00	40.00
Total	2500	1752.02	747.98
Educational Activities			
Action	25		25.00
Observer Reports	150	136.06	13.94
Programs	300	310.95	-10.95
Speakers	100	-25.00	125.00
Study Aids	25		25.00
Voter Service	100	332.10	-232.10
Website	111	119.40	-8.40
Total	811	873.51	-62.51
Operating Expenses			
Directory	50		50.00
Hospitality	175	424.83	-249.83
Insurance/Liability	95	108.00	-13.00
Rent/Meetings	0		0.00
Shop Talk	100	16.05	83.95
Total	420	548.88	-128.88
Support			
Lake Michigan ILO	25	25.00	0.00

	LWVIL \$27/member	1377	1417.50	-40.50
	LWVUS \$30/member	1530	1575.00	-45.00
	Other	20	25.00	-5.00
	Total	2952	3042.50	-90.50
	TOTAL EXPENDITURES	7068	6565.69	502.31
	INCOME LESS EXPENDITURES	0	-585.50	-585.50

LWVUS CONVENTION - Jan Dorner
The Power of the Vote: Imagine, Commit, Act

The pre-convention workshop on Friday afternoon was titled *Power Our Voice to Power the Vote*. We heard Carolyn Lukensmeyer, founder and President of America Speaks, address concerns about the confidence of the health of American Democracy. The United States is the most mature democracy with the lowest voter turnout. In the past, Americans were more concerned about solving problems than their own ideology. There needs to be profound systemic changes in:

- Money in politics
- Redistricting
- Open primaries

She said there has never been a more important time to promote active citizenship.

We need to:

- Look at the facts of important issues.
- Learn how other see things.
- Help those around us to be better informed.
- Share our views publicly.

- Vote and encourage others to go to the polls.

Rick Johnson, the Managing Director of Lake Research followed with information from focus groups that were done in October 2011 about the League of Women Voters. The overall news was good, with the groups having heard of the League, but saying they didn't know much about anything we did. The more they were told about LWV, the more the groups were excited and some even wanted to join. We need more visibility. See www.lwv.org/files/Report_LWVFocusGroup.pdf for the full report.

Michelle Molloy, a communication specialist, walked us through "making it mediagenic;" that is, boil it down and jazz it up. She gave us many suggestions about how communication supports our goal.



Illinois delegates looked to LWV Elmhurst's Sue Whitworth to find seats on the convention floor.

The actual convention started with a welcome by the Honorable Eleanor Holmes Norton who is Washington D.C.'s delegate to the U.S. House of Representatives. She encouraged all delegates to contact their members of Congress about allowing the District to manage themselves and allow D.C. citizens to vote.

In her President's address, LWV President Elisabeth MacNamara said that the League needs to finish the

fight for suffrage. We currently are experiencing the greatest assault on voting rights in 50 years. She also challenged the delegates to contribute to the Fund for Local League Growth (previously named the Leadership Fund). Over the next four days, the assemblage collected over \$33,000 in contributions. (The LWVUS Board had set the challenge at \$15,000.)

One of the pieces to come before the group was a staff report that they had joined a coalition to have a National Voter Registration Day on September 25, 2012. This is the start of Yom Kippur. I spoke with the staff member after the presentation. She replied that LWV had come late to this group and the day was already chosen. I later spoke to two LWVUS Board members (Pat Donath and Elisabeth MacNamara) who were both surprised about this date. Pat suggested that I present this as a direction to the Board, which I did.

A new program was introduced: *Flack Checking Political Sleaze*. Flackcheck.org, a sister website to factcheck.org, is a site where the public can report erroneous ads. Although TV stations can

refuse third-party ads that are deceptive, it's important to recognize that the stations also charge the highest advertising rates for them. Actual candidate ad rates are the lowest rates and these ads cannot be refused.



LWV Elmhurst President Jan Dorner and delegates engaged in lively discussions at convention.

The Proposed 2012-2014 National Program was presented, as well as six intentions to move consideration of not-recommended program items. The delegates to the LWVUS convention adopted the following LWVUS Board recommended items:

- Retention of all current LWVUS positions,
- The concurrence with the sentencing policy position of the LWV of the District of Columbia: The LWVUS believes alternatives to imprisonment should be explored and utilized, taking into consideration the circumstances and nature of

the crime. The LWVUS opposes mandatory minimum sentences for drug offenses.

- A comprehensive program to educate members and communities on the issue of campaign finance in order to inform our education and legislative efforts as needed.

Of the six non-recommended program items that were announced earlier, only one made it through the process of consideration and approval:

- Review and update of the LWVUS agriculture position, approved in 1988. Such a review would investigate genetic modification, consolidation in the food industry, money in the regulatory process, and the consumer's right to accurate and comprehensive food labeling.

The delegates also approved a resolution calling on the LWVUS Board to advocate strongly for all appropriate, duly-considered measures which may include, but are not limited to, a constitutional amendment and which: are consistent with our current positions on campaign finance reform and individual liberties; allow Congress and the States to set reasonable regulations on campaign contributions and

and expenditures; and ensure that elections are determined by the voters.

The Monday morning session consisted of a panel discussion on “How Do We Unite and Conquer,” with Eleanor Clift (The McLaughlin Group), Mickey Edwards (former 16-yr Congressman from OK), and Trevor Potter (former chair of the Federal Election Commission and lawyer for the Colbert Super-PAC). One of the many interesting things that this group discussed was the fact that the vicious super Pac ads are used as voter suppression. They discourage voters from voting.

Later that morning, US Attorney General Eric Holder addressed the convention and emphasized the need to concentrate on (1) deceptive practices, (2) neutrality in redistricting and (3) modernization of voter registration.

Monday afternoon we all attended the same workshop, entitled “Power Tools You Can Use to Power The Vote.” This was a three-hour workshop that focused on preparing a work plan to include partnering with other

organizations, messaging and visibility, leadership and membership development, and fundraising.

There were a couple of “housekeeping” type bylaw changes that were approved by the delegates as well as changing the ratio for attending convention. Now, every 50 members in a League are entitled to a delegate rather than every 100 members.

Delegates voted to approve the pmps at \$31/year, an increase of \$1 per year. They also approve the next two years worth of budget: the LWVUS 2012-13 and 2013-2014.

The very last piece of convention business was “Guidance to the Board” As discussed earlier, I stated the following:
I am disappointed that LWVUS staff decided to join the National Voter Registration Day Coalition even though they realized that it was Yom Kippur. I call on the Board of LWVUS to reconsider this membership and find a more appropriate date.

Those of you who have attended an LWVUS

convention know lots of activities were not discussed in this article. There were many caucuses from early in the morning until late at night. The dine-around was a chance to network with people from throughout the country. The Capitol Steps – a political comedy troupe, treated us to a performance and we saw the movie *Patriocracy*.

Let me end with a quote from Attorney General Holder, “I urge you – regardless of the opposition you face – to stay true, and remain fiercely committed, to the principles that have always guided the League of Women Voters and that can ensure that the 21st will be another *American century*.”



Senator Dick Durbin met with Elmhurst LWV members Sue Whitworth, left, and Jeanne Davik, right, to discuss the League’s program after convention.

***SISTERS ACROSS THE STRAITS** - Susan Rose, President*

On May 14, 2012, **Susan Rose**, LWV Elmhurst President and member Peggy Tschetter traveled to Miami to join other LWV members for a week-long visit to Cuba.

In the spirit of cooperation and strengthening relations with women's groups in Cuba, the League of Women Voters of Florida Education Fund sponsored the *Sisters Across the Straits* delegation visit to Cuba from May 14 – 20, to learn about that nation's history, culture and social structure. The purpose of this visit was to improve relations and build partnerships with our neighbors to the South, leading to a better understanding after decades of isolation.

Travel to Cuba is restricted by the Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) of the United States Treasury Department. Groups such as the LWV-SF who have a license to travel there must have a full-time schedule of educational exchange activities that will result in meaningful interaction between the travelers and individuals in Cuba.

Under the leadership of League Director and former state Representative **Annie Betancourt**, 25 League members traveled to Cuba. Delegation members interacted with their Cuban counterparts and participated in open dialogue to understand daily life situations as a method of understanding the role of women in Cuban society.

The itinerary included:

- **Federacion de la Mujeres**, a state-sponsored organization that attempts to better the lives of Cuban women through education and training in usable work skills.
- **Trinidad**, a 500-year-old city rich with Spanish colonial architecture. Only a few square blocks in size, it is famous for its lovely, cobblestone streets, and pastel colored houses with elaborate wrought-iron grills.
- **Valley of the Sugar Mills**, a World Heritage site now famous for tobacco processing, has over 70 long-standing sugar mills that were worked by slaves and their descendants for generations. While sugar is still a significant product in Cuba, the industry is much smaller in the past 15 years.
- **Bay of Pigs**, (Playa Giron in Spanish), the attempted invasion that took place here in 1961 is a highly-politicized event in US and Cuban history. It is hugely significant to the current Cuban government, as an example of how they were able to “beat back the counterrevolutionaries” and keep the revolution going forward. It is a peaceful bay now that belies the bloodshed that occurred here 51 years ago.
- **Center for U.S. Hemispheric Studies (CEHSEU)**, a teaching and research center of the University of Havana, focusing on studying US political trends. Discussion centered on US national elections and Florida state races.
- **Editorial de La Mujer**, a state-sponsored publishing house that specializes in magazines and books of interest to women and children. They even produce paper dolls of Cuba's favorite sport – baseball!
- **Cojimar**, a seaside fishing village where we were treated to a performance by young student dancers who had just finished a salsa dancing competition. They were fantastic!
- **Hemingway's retreat**, just outside Havana, where Hemingway and his often famous visitors, spent their time relaxing, drinking and sometimes writing. It has only recently been restored through a joint effort of American and Cuban preservationists.

In addition to the planned itinerary, we had great discussions with other League members, interaction with Cubans in private restaurants (*pala-dares*), and fun listening and dancing to Cuban music.

People have asked if Cuba was what I expected and I had to say, I'm not sure what I expected. It was the chance of a lifetime to visit this country and try to understand the issues that separate us from our neighbors to the south. We are so fortunate that the LWV-SF sponsored this delegation. Cuba is not an easy country to visit, but it was a great experience to meet Cuban people and learn from them about their lives.

Susan Rose at the Center for US Hemispheric Studies at the University of Havana.

P.S. On Thursday, July 12, 2012, I presented a PowerPoint program to the Elmhurst Rotary Club about the League trip to Cuba. Rotary members were interested with many good questions about the social, business, and political climate in Cuba.



The Affordable Care Act – The Importance for Women

Janet S. Craft, LWVIL Health Care Issue Specialist

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The Campaign for Better Health Care (CBHC) is reaching out to educate, engage and empower women to gain support for health care reform through a series of training sessions in Chicago and other areas, in August and early September. LWVIL is partnering with CBHC along with other organizations including the Illinois Maternal & Child Health Coalition, Planned Parenthood of IL, Mujeres En Accion, Coalition of 100 Black Women, and Personal PAC.

Watch for training dates and locations on the LWVIL web site. If you are interested in this opportunity to strengthen our advocacy for health reform, please contact Janet. If there is strong interest in our League, it may be possible to schedule one in our area.

Why Focus on Women?

Being a woman is essentially a pre-existing condition when it comes to health care costs and insurance. Beginning August 1, under the Affordable Care Act (ACA) women will be covered at no cost for well women visits, lactation consultation, contraception, gestational diabetes screenings and HIV screenings. Gender bias in insurance premiums will be eliminated by 2014 and pre-existing conditions cannot include pregnancy or having had a cesarean section, breast or cervical cancer.

Though women viewed the ACA slightly more favorably than men in a spring poll by the Kaiser Family Foundation, Americans were still split evenly after the June Supreme Court decision. A survey

(Lake Research Partners) found that less than 1 in 4 women feel they know a significant amount about the law. However, after a brief overview of the provisions of the law, women grow more favorable toward the ACA and supported it by 25 points.

“The Affordable Care Act – the Importance for Women” trainings will get participants up to speed on provisions of the law, provide tools to frame its benefits, and emphasize the need for implementation in Illinois.



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