



League of Women Voters LaGrange Area

February 2010

FROM YOUR PRESIDENT

Dear Leaguer,

All of us who have been wailing and moaning about the state of our state finally have a chance at reform:

The ILLINOIS FAIR MAP AMENDMENT.

As it is now, legislators draw district lines behind closed doors. The “drawing” party, Republican or Democrat, is decided by picking a name out of a hat. The result? Districts are drawn to protect incumbents, protect friends and punish enemies. Power lands in the hands of a few, and stays there.

The Illinois Fair Map Amendment will require that an independent citizens’ commission draw the maps, which will be drawn in an open and transparent process with public input. The specific criteria will protect minority voting rights and work to eliminate partisan advantage, by not favoring any political party. Government by the PEOPLE!

Now, we all have to GET TO WORK and get these petitions SIGNED, carefully and correctly, and notarized before April 30. Attached is a copy of the 2-sided petition, which must be reproduced with BOTH SIDES, along with instructions and comparison sheets to help you and your signers understand what we can accomplish. We have some work ahead, but we can get it done!

Linda Christianson
President

February Meeting Book Club Discussion

The monthly program in February 2010, will be our annual book club discussion. The subject of the discussion this year will be The Nine: Inside the Secret World of the Supreme Court by Jeffrey Toobin. We will meet Feb. 16th at 7:30pm at Barbara Zehnder's home, 140 N. Edgewood Ave., La Grange. The discussion leader will be Krista Grimm

FEBRUARY 27th Celebrating 90 Years of League with a Tapas Party!

Throughout February, Leagues all over the country will commemorate this milestone. The La Grange Area League will celebrate with our fabulous **Tapas Party** on February 27! Both celebration and fundraiser, the festal evening at the Klonowski's will be *the* place to reflect upon the League's legacy of accomplishment and to celebrate our local contributions and friendships! Be sure to RSVP to the invitation you received last week so you won't be left out!

LWV COOK COUNTY

LWVCC is organizing its 2010 Board and are looking for persons interested in becoming active on a county level. There are opportunities to work on any of the LWVCC various committees in special interest groups to get in at ground level to understand County Board workings. Please let me know -Lorna Neuneker 708-352-1512 if you are interested.

LWVCC Interest Groups

In order to be more focused on action this year LWVCC has formed **Interest Groups**. Groups will meet on a regular basis (frequency determined by the group) so that participants can discuss topics of interest and develop ideas to focus on action based on the LWVCC positions as outlined in Where We Stand (can be found at www.cookcounty.il.lwvnet.org).

Any questions: contact LWVCC at cook@lwvill.org. We invite you to get involved with the group that interests you. If you are interested in participating in an Interest Group please email the Contact Person.

Cook County Budget and Structure

Focus - How Cook County operates and how the money for operations is collected and spent

Contact Person - Stephanie Polito - spolito178@gmail.com

Next Meeting - Thursday, February 18 at 10:30am at Cosi Restaurant, corner of Washington and Franklin

Juvenile Justice

Focus - Problems experienced by & Cook County services available to the youth of Cook County in trouble with the law

Contact Person - Millie Juskevics - millie@juskevics.com

Next Meeting - TBD

Forest Preserve District

Focus - Cook County Forest Preserves and the Cook County Board that oversees them

Contact Person - Henrietta Saunders - hankandboys@comcast.net

Next Meeting - Wednesday, February 10 - following the Cook County Forest Preserve District Board Meeting

Health and Hospital Systems

Focus - Cook County's mission of providing health services to the citizens of Cook County

Contact Person - Nancy Staunton - nstaunton1@comcast.net

Next Meeting - Saturday, February 27 at 9:30am at the League office, 332 S. Michigan Ave., Suite 1150, Chicago

Greetings from your Lake Michigan League of Women Voters!

Let's all celebrate the funding for preservation of the Great Lakes that became law in 2009. We need to be vigilant that the monies are spent appropriately in 2010 and that we are successful in keeping the Asian Carp out of the Lakes.

Our Lake Michigan League of Women Voters Newsletter is now available to view, download or print at <http://www.lmlwv.org> Please forward this link to all who share our commitment to protecting our Inland Seas.

Lake Michigan League of Women Voters also has a current news Blog with timely links to other like minded organizations at: <http://lakemichiganlww.wordpress.com> We invite you to sign up there for the RSS Feed.

Thank you for your interest and past support as well as continued effort you will make this year to keep our Great Lakes preserved and protected.

Feel free to contact us or call if you have any questions or concerns.

Judy Johnston, Co-President, jrjohn246@yahoo.com

Jeanette Neagu, Co-President, jgvneagu@yahoo.com

Lake Michigan LWV ILLINOIS STATE REPORT on INVASIVE CARP

Submitted by Krista Grimm

Several species of invasive carp have been detected just miles from Lake Michigan in the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal. The Asian carp are large fish, growing up to 4 ½ feet and up to 100 pounds, with voracious appetites. They eat enormous amounts of plankton, a typical food source for small fish, disrupting the food chain and threatening the ecology in whatever habitat it invades. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service website calls the potential invasion—an impending ecological disaster. In addition to environmental degradation and competition for native and sport fish species, an invasion would create a huge economic cost to Great Lakes fisheries. The Lake Michigan League has been monitoring the situation, and members have advocated for immediate action to prevent the fish from reaching the Great Lakes.

Federal planners realized that the carp in the Mississippi and Illinois Rivers potentially could reach Lake Michigan and the other Great Lakes nearly a decade ago. Though there is no natural connection between Lake Michigan and the Mississippi River, the two bodies of water were connected in 1900 with the construction of the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal and the reversal of the Chicago River. The Army Corps of Engineers planned and constructed an electric barrier in the Sanitary Canal near Romeoville, Illinois to keep the fish at bay. The barrier went live on April 8, 2009.

In spite of the early recognition of the potential problem, the fish have been pernicious in making progress toward the lake. They were detected in the Des Plaines River, the Illinois & Michigan Canal, and the Sanitary Canal north of the barrier this fall. Great Lakes advocates are calling for authorities to permanently close the locks dividing the rivers and canals from the lake. Such action seemed unlikely, because it would disrupt shipping traffic to the Mississippi River. But the state of Michigan recently threatened legal action against Illinois to force the closure.

The Asian Carp Rapid Response Working Group, a task force of local, state, regional, and federal agencies, has been formed to address the emergency. The Illinois Department of Natural Resources is the lead agency in this effort. On December 3, the canal south of the barrier was poisoned with a fish-specific agent. Nothing has been done about the fish already north of the barrier and no long term plans have been announced to deal with the issue.

Should the carp get past the locks, some say that not all will be lost. Asian carp have been known to be present in Lake Erie for about a decade. The carp population has remained small enough there not to overwhelm other species—so far. Lake Michigan advocates would rather see action to prevent an infestation than hope that it isn't that bad.

If the health of Lake Michigan is important to you, please join us in calling for authorities to take immediate action on this issue. The status of the situation literally changes daily, and if you'd like to keep informed, we will add you to our listserv. Please email Cheryl Chapman at ccfritter@yahoo.com to be added.

Illinois Fair Map Initiative - Press Conference...December 3, 2009

Statement by Nancy Marcus, President, League of Women Voters of Illinois

The League of Women Voters has historically promoted the idea that citizen participation is key to maintaining and strengthening democracy. We are pleased to join with the Better Government Association, the Illinois Campaign for Political Reform and members of the Illinois Reform Commission to launch a citizens' initiative and the "Take Back Illinois" campaign, the goal of which is to garner petition signatures to place the Illinois Fair Map Amendment on the November 2010 general election ballot.

The principles embodied in the Fair Map Amendment correspond well with the elements LWVIL believes are essential: a redistricting process that is timely and transparent, includes a formal announced timetable, makes information and related data available to all who wish to participate in the process, offers ample opportunity for public reaction to any proposed maps, maximizes diversity, and results in maps which offer voters a choice of candidates for election.

Illinois has serious challenges ahead. As you may know, a report released by the Pew Center on the States last month reported that Illinois is among ten states where the consequences of the current economic downturn is wreaking havoc, in part because Illinois' leaders have been putting off making tough decisions and where the political resolve to enact long-term fixes to its fiscal problems is lacking.

The League of Women Voters of Illinois believes that underlying this analysis as well as a myriad of other issues is a lack of accountability on the part of those who've been elected to the Illinois General Assembly. Sadly, this includes a seeming indifference to the culture of corruption that has for too long been a hallmark of politics as usual in this state.

The League believes that redistricting is the next item on the reform agenda in Illinois. A citizen initiative involves the public in a significant way both by collecting signatures and also because of the amendment itself which allows for public participation. This proposed amendment makes the process more transparent and creates an independent commission all of which will result in legislative districts that will elect legislators who understand the enormous challenges and respond with laws that reflect the public interest.

The LWVGA BIG committee is asking every League member to circulate the Fair Map Amendment petitions. Included in this newsletter is the petition for Cook County residents. You can download the petition for other counties or the city of Chicago <http://www.ilfairmap.com/sign-the-petition/> or you can call 312-939-5935,x39 to request that petitions be mailed to you. You can contact Jeanine Jasica at 708/246-3475 or Lorna Neuneker at 708/352-1512 if you have any questions. The deadline to turn the petitions into Jeanine is April 15. Please read the following "Do's & Don'ts" carefully to make sure your effort will not be wasted!

PETITION DO'S AND DON'TS

(based on the Illinois State Board of Elections, 2009 Guide)

Circulators:

1. Do not number your petitions; they will be numbered when all Cook County petitions are bound together.
2. A petition circulator must be 18 years of age or older and a citizen of the United States. The circulator need not be a registered voter. The circulator must personally witness all signatures given and sign the certificate at the bottom of the sheet that requires she/he state that all signatures were taken in her/his presence. No one may be considered a circulator of any petition page except the person who signs its certificate.
3. The petition circulator must complete and sign the statement at the bottom of each sheet certifying that the signatures on that sheet were signed in her/his presence and are genuine and that to the best of her/his knowledge the persons so signing were duly registered voters of the political subdivision (Cook County) at the time of signing.
4. This petition is the Cook County format so all signers must be registered to vote in & reside in Cook County.
5. Each sheet must be notarized (bank, village hall, Jeanine Jasica) and the notary should not have signed the petition sheet she/he is notarizing.
6. Dark ink is preferred on petitions but pencil signatures are allowed.
7. Standard abbreviations may be used in writing the resident's address.
8. Circulator should sign the bottom of each petition in front of a notary.
9. Signers need to be reminded to sign neatly and clearly.

Petition signers:

1. Petition signers must be registered voters in the political subdivision (Cook County).
2. The voter should sign the petition as she/he is registered to vote.
3. Petition signers shall indicate on the petition their residence address. The address on the petition must be the signer's voter registration address.
4. A registered voter must sign the petition in his own person. One may not sign for someone else, such as another member of her/his own family.

<u>DATE</u>	<u>EVENT</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>
TUESDAY FEB 16 th 7:30pm	BOOK DISCUSSION <u>The Nine: Inside the Secret World of the Supreme Court</u> by Jeffrey Toobin	Barbara Zehnder's House 140 N. Edgewood Ave. La Grange
TUESDAY FEB 23 RD 7:30PM	LWVLGA BOARD MEETING	Linda Christianson's House 131 S. Edgewood LaGrange
SATURDAY FEB 27 th	TAPAS PARTY RSVP to your invitation NOW!	KLONOWSKI'S 215 S. Brainard, LaGrange
THURSDAY Mar 4 th 7:15 – 8:45 PM	GREAT DECISIONS	Emmanuel Episcopal Church 203 S. Kensington LaGrange

The LWVLGA gratefully acknowledges the law firm of Golan & Christie, LLP and member Barb Yong for their services.

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LWV LaGrange Area website <http://lagrangearealwv.org/>

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