



League of Women Voters LaGrange Area

September 2009

<u>DATE</u>	<u>EVENT</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>
SATURDAY Sept 12th 11:30AM – 1:30 PM Reservation Deadline: Sept 6	LWVLGA KICK-OFF LUNCHEON THE SPRINGFIELD SCENE: WHAT'S HOT-WHAT'S NOT STATE SENATE MINORITY LEADER: CHRISTINE RADOGNO	THE OAKS HOTEL & CONFERENCE CENTER 300 S. Frontage Rd. Burr Ridge \$30/Person <i>Details Inside</i>
TUESDAY Sept 22 nd 7:15 PM	LWV LaGrange Area Board Meeting	Linda Christianson's House 131 S. Edgewood LaGrange
SATURDAY Oct 17 th 11AM – 3PM	HOW COOL IS YOUR HOME? Environmental Fair	LTHS South Campus <i>Volunteers Needed</i> <i>See Inside for more info</i>

LWV LaGrange Area 2009-2010 Program Schedule

September: Kick-off brunch
Speaker: Chris Radogno
Committee: Mary Lou, Linda C, Sally M (Captain)

October: Cool Cities Program
Venue: South Campus Lyons Township HS
Date: Oct 17

November: Reform and Budget Issues

December: Pot Luck

January: "What is Cook County" -- Basics regarding how the county government is run

February: Book Discussion
The Nine, Jeffrey Toobin

March: CAASE Stats/Issues (Chicago Alliance Against Sexual Exploitation)

April: Health Care (explore single-payer Health Care and other options)

May: Annual Meeting

FROM YOUR PRESIDENT

What a pleasure to welcome our new members! Actually they are already in our LWV family: Cynthia's daughter **Meredith Schilsky**, and my husband **REMINDER: Send In Your Membership Renewal**

If you have not already sent in your renewal form, please do so today! The new membership directory will be printed this Fall and we need to have your updated information. If you need a form or any assistance, please contact Carolyn Norris at 579-5969 or carolynnorris@hotmail.com.

Rick Blackwell, who signed on with only a little persuasion.

They chose a great time to join, just as we begin our exciting new season of activities. The first is our **luncheon on Saturday, September 12** featuring Sen. Christine Radogno. Sen. Radogno promises to help us make sense of the confusing scene in Springfield, with some guidance as to how we as a League can have an impact on current legislation. Don't miss it! For details about the luncheon, contact Sally Mitchell at smitch3@comcast.net or (708) 246-0306.

As you know it's **membership re-up** season, so if you haven't yet renewed your League membership for this year, now is the time. What better way to have your voice heard for honest, fair government practices? For membership details, contact our Membership Chair Carolyn Norris at carolynnorris@hotmail.com or (708) 579-5969.

Our LWV continues as a member of the **Lake Michigan League of Women Voters**, lobbying to protect Lake Michigan. Our LWV should have at least one representative to participate in their membership meeting in Saugatuck, MI, on October 2-3 where they will be considering water management issues that will affect us all. For further information about this meeting, please contact Krista Grimm at grimmk@earthlink.net or (708) 354-9267.

At our August board meeting we established a policy regarding the **forwarding of e-mail** messages to our membership: communications from the state or national LWV, or from our coalition partners will be forwarded to the membership; other communications will only be forwarded on a discretionary basis. Please do not use the membership directory e-mail list for non-LWV related communications.

One more thing: our Development Chair Lisa DenBesten is still selling those wonderful **green carrybags**: \$6 apiece or 2 for \$10. A bargain!! You can reach Lisa at ladenbesten@cs.com to order a couple.

Linda Christianson
President

Newsletter Editor: Jean Klotter.....708/345-3912 LWV LaGrange Area website..... http://lagrangearealwv.org/
--

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

From the League of Women Voters of Cook County ...

Trip to Cook County Medical Examiner's Office.

Watch for information via e-mail soon about a chance to visit this office.

Next "Lunch & Learn" Fundraiser on Nov. 10 Features Cook County Assessor James Houlihan.

Watch for an e-mail shortly to attend this \$30 luncheon at the DePaul Center downtown. Don't have e-mail? Call the

League at 312-939-5935, ext. 27 and leave word that you're interested and how to contact you.

Cong. Quigley Speaks at 1st "Lunch & Learn" Fundraiser.

The first of a series of 3 low-cost luncheon fundraisers planned for this year to raise much needed funds for the Cook County League's operations was a sold-out success. Former Cook County Commissioner Mike Quigley, who now represents the Illinois 5th District in Congress, told us that it is thanks to the League's efforts that led to single member districts that he was able to be elected as a Cook County Commissioner in 1998. At that time, there was no such thing as a "no" vote on the Cook County Board. Now that happens regularly, and across party lines.

In order to reform any government body, Congressman Quigley said that three questions should first be asked and answered. (1) What should the government be doing? (2) How should the government be doing it? (3) Who should be doing it within the government? Cook County government was set up over 100 years ago when much of the county was unincorporated and the world was a very different place. It is no wonder that changes need to be made. Now we have a county highway department that is responsible for the upkeep (including snow plowing) of small stretches of roads that are scattered across the county. Similarly, the Cook County Sheriff has responsibility for providing police services for scattered areas within Cook County. Efficiencies are difficult to achieve in these cases unless the county contracts with adjoining local governments to provide these services, which Mr. Quigley has long advocated.

Congressman Quigley identified three main reasons that change is blocked: turf, power, and jobs. He also said he was concerned about both the lack of reformers who are willing to run and the electability of those who would be reformers. He distinguished progressives, those who may favor certain positions on key issues, from real reformers who are willing to take stands on tough issues, but even more importantly, who are willing to make the effort to craft reforms and build support to get the reforms passed.

The Congressman reminded us of Thomas Jefferson's statement that people tend to get the government that they deserve. He ended on a hopeful note, with his observation that in Cook County we may have only seen incremental change, but that it has begun.

Poll Reporting Project Leads to Changes!

Members from 13 of the local leagues in Cook County participated in the Poll Reporting Project for suburban Cook County in the November 2008 election. The Cook County League submitted a report of the results of our members' observations to and then met with Cook County Clerk David Orr who is responsible for suburban elections. Mr. Orr has responded in detail to our recommendations and concerns. Among other items, Mr. Orr has told us that his staff is looking into the possibility of having high school students help election judges set up and take down the heavy equipment. Checklists of opening and closing tasks with manual page number references have been developed for the election judges along the lines we suggested. Mr. Orr's staff has investigated the polling places that were identified on surveys as being inadequate and where possible, either different locations within the building or a new location altogether will be found. Copies of Mr. Orr's responses have been sent to the local league Presidents and those who coordinated the project for the local leagues.

Thanks to you who participated in this project and to Mr. Orr and his staff, improvements in the election process are being made! You should be proud of the positive difference you have made!

May Annual Meeting Update.

Delegates from the 16 local leagues that make up the Cook County League approved a revised *Where We Stand* which now contains positions on the following areas within Cook County: County Government, Criminal Justice, Health Care, Juvenile Justice, and Township School System. Go to the League's website to read the specifics on these positions: www.cookcounty.il.lwvnet.org.

LWV LaGrange Area continues to be well represented in the Cook County league. Cynthia Schilsky was elected President, Lorna Neuneker was elected to serve on the Nominating Committee, and Krista Grimm is our local representative.

Following the business meeting, **Cook County State's Attorney Anita Alvarez** addressed the group, speaking about the challenges she faced in running for the office, as well as about some of the changes she is making within her office.

Check out www.cookcounty.il.lwvnet.org to read the **Observers' Blog** for reports on the Cook County Board and some Board Committee meetings, as well as meetings of the Cook County Health and Hospitals Board. You can also view the organization charts and information about "**How Cook County Spends Our Money**" which garnered the Cook County League a Spotlight on League Achievement Award in the category of Community Collaboration/Outreach at the LWVIL Convention this past June.

NEWS UPDATE FROM LWVUS

League Position on Comprehensive Health Care Reform Legislation: Public Option Essential!

In her letter of July 16th to the House of Representatives, LWVUS President Mary G. Wilson advocated for the League's position in support of America's Affordable Health Choices Act of 2009. She wrote, "America is facing a health care crisis caused by a combination of skyrocketing costs and an insurance system that leaves 47 million of us without any coverage. The current health care system is endangering both our economy and our health, and voters have made it clear that they want change. According to a study reported in *The New England Journal of Medicine*, 70 percent of Americans surveyed believe the health care system needs major changes, if not a complete overhaul. All Americans must have health care coverage, including the choice of a quality, affordable public insurance plan. It is universal

coverage that will determine the humanity of our system. We believe that health care reform legislation must guarantee access to comprehensive and essential benefits to all U.S. residents.”

In a statement issued August 19, 2009, President Wilson expands upon the necessity of the public option for true reform of the health care system: “But the possibility of universal coverage is not the only advantage of the public option,” warned Wilson. “We must control costs and the public option is the best chance to bring costs into line with reality. As a nation, we are spending \$1 out of every \$6 we earn on health care. Over the last three decades, increases in the amount we spend on health care have consistently risen faster than wages and inflation. Health care reform must provide effective cost controls, equitable distribution of services and allow for efficient and economical delivery of care. Offering everyone the choice of a government administered health insurance plan like Medicare that would compete with private health insurance plans is key to lowering costs.” “The public option is critical to health care reform,” Wilson concluded. “Now is not the time for politicians to get cold feet just because a handful of special-interest-backed protesters spread lies and make noise at public forums. Congress and the President need to demonstrate real leadership and move forward with true health care reform.”

During the Congressional recess, League members all over the country have been contacting their Senators and Representatives urging them to support reform legislation. When they return to Washington in September, our elected officials will determine how these issues take shape in ways that will affect our country profoundly. Opponents are ramping up their efforts to fight quality reform, hence your voice is needed more than ever. To read more about the League’s position on health care reform visit www.lwv.org. You will find voter-ready articles and background papers. If you cannot access the League online, and would like hard copies of materials, please contact Carolyn Norris.

League Releases ‘Principles’ from Pocantico Redistricting Conference

In late July, the League, in partnership with the Campaign Legal Center, convened a group of leaders and activists to examine possible redistricting strategies for 2011 and beyond. At the conclusion of this gathering, the participants joined in support of a Statement of Essential Principles of Redistricting. The LWVUS will be working with state Leagues to develop a plan for forming partnerships, strategies and messaging that can have real impact on redistricting in individual states. Check out the press release online and watch for further information on this effort.

LWVUS on Facebook

The League has a brand new Facebook Fan page. Some state and local Leagues have already created Facebook pages. The LWVUS is in the process of coordinating LWV Facebook efforts for maximum visibility, including plans for a Best Practices Guide for Leagues who want to create their own pages. The new Fan page is separate from, but linked to, the Cause page. If you are not already on Facebook, you can join at www.facebook.com. Members can add a link in his or her email signature to help spread the word.

Leagues Celebrate Women’s Equality Day August 26th

Many Leagues across the country will commemorate the 89th anniversary of the passage of the 19th Amendment with a screening of the film “Iron Jawed Angels”, including our local League!

REMINDER: Send In Your Membership Renewal

If you have not already sent in your renewal form, please do so today! The new membership directory will be printed this Fall and we need to have your updated information. If you need a form or any assistance, please contact Carolyn Norris at 579-5969 or carolynnorris@hotmail.com.

Congratulations to Andy Boyd 2009 LWVGA Scholarship Recipient

Andy Boyd was awarded a \$650.00 scholarship offered by the League of Women Voters of La Grange Area, funded by its Legacy Fund. Mr. Boyd demonstrated an interest and knowledge in current affairs at the international, national, state or local level and participated in community service at the international, national, state or local level. This spring and last, Mr. Boyd, in conjunction with the LWVGA, ran a voter registration drive at LTHS and, this past fall, held a mock election. He plans on attending Marquette University in the fall. Good luck Andy! LWVGA wishes you all the best in your continued education. Below is his winning essay.

I grew up in a house where politics was always a topic of conversation and everyone had an opinion. I sat by my parents as we watched news coverage of the Clinton administration and the history that was unfolding. In fifth grade I may have been the only student in class that was interested in the election of our county’s highest position. I have been interested in politics ever since. The majority of my political knowledge came during the Bush administration as I started to form my own political views.

As a high school student I became very passionate about the issues around me and realized how important the Bill of Rights was to all citizens of this country. I was eager to take part in the voting process that this country offers and realized how many Americans do not take full advantage of this right. Plenty of countries in this world do not have the right to choose who they really would like to vote for and I realized how lucky we are to live in this beautiful country of ours. I wanted to be part of the solution of causing more Americans to participate in this right.

In the spring of my junior year as my semester project of WLTL-LaGrange, the high school radio station that I am part of, I took on the task of running a voter registration drive at Lyons Township High School for its students. I wanted to take on this project because the earlier that an individual votes in their life, the more likely they are to continue voting for the rest of their life. I felt that people who vote early will continue as a lifelong habit. I contacted the LaGrange area League of Women Voters who took on this task with me. I had to set everything up and contact numerous individuals to make this event happen. In one day's work I was able to register 118 high school students who were able to vote in the November 2008 elections.

In the Fall I contacted the League once more to discuss the possibility of holding a mock election at LT for all students to take part in. I was able to coordinate this event with the League and the Cook County Board of Elections. We held the mock election on one day and were able to get over a third of the school to vote, providing authentic voting booths and optical scanners. I wanted again to give the students of LT the chance to familiarize themselves with the voting process and feel part of the democratic process.

I took on these projects because I was excited about the historic election and wanted others to have a similar attitude. The right to vote for elected officials is the greatest gift a government can give to their citizenry and everyone should feel their participation is important. I feel that throughout this entire process I have gained new respect for all those who help make an election possible.

President Obama said in his inaugural address on the steps of our nation's capital, "In reaffirming the greatness of our nation, we understand that greatness is never a given. It must be earned." I believe my generation can earn some share of that greatness by participating in the electoral process.

DON'T MISS OUT...REGISTRATION FORM INSIDE
REGISTRATION DEADLINE: September 6th

LWV LaGrange Area Fall 2009-2010 FALL KICK-OFF LUNCHEON

DATE: SEPTEMBER 12

TIME: 11:30 AM – 3 PM

**LOCATION: THE OAKS HOTEL & CONFERENCE CENTER
300 S. FRONTAGE RD., BURR RIDGE**

“THE SPRINGFIELD SCENE: WHAT’S HOT – WHAT’S NOT”

FEATURED SPEAKER:

STATE SENATOR & MINORITY LEADER

CHRISTINE RADOGNO (R-Dist. 41)