



League Links

LWV AH-MP-BG Area

Newsletter of the League of Women Voters of the Arlington Heights-Mount Prospect-Buffalo Grove Area
Including Prospect Heights, Wheeling, and Elk Grove Village, Illinois

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November 2015

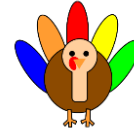
Volume 61, Issue 4







Serving our communities since 1955

Our Mission Statement/Purpose: 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.



ACTIVITY CALENDAR



Date	Time	Event
Wed Nov 11		See a tribute beginning at the bottom of page 3.
Fri, Nov 13		"70 Acres in Chicago" movie outing at Gene Siskel Film Center. See page 3.
Sun, Nov 15		"Suffragette" movie outing at Randhurst. See page 3.
Thu, Nov 19	Doors open at 7pm Program at 7:30pm 	Public Event – Join us for a presentation titled 'Cook County Matters' presented by Cynthia Schilsky. Arlington Heights Historical Society 110 W. Fremont, Arlington Heights, IL 60004
Tue, Dec 1	6:30pm-9pm	Board Meeting - Members, you are welcome to join us at Connie's house.
Wed, Dec 16		First day to apply for a mail-in ballot. Ballots will be sent out after Feb. 4, and returned ballots must be postmarked by March 14. The last day for applying is March 10.
Tue, Jan 5	6:30pm-9pm	Board Meeting - Members, you are welcome to join us at Connie's house.
Mon, Jan 18	Mark Your Calendar!	Public Event – Selma Film Screening Metropolis Performing Arts Center 111 W. Campbell, Arlington Heights, IL 60005
Tue, Feb 2	6:30pm-9pm	Board Meeting - Members, you are welcome to join us at Connie's house.
Tue, Feb 16		Last day to register to vote, except for Grace Period and Election Day.
Thu, Feb 18		Members, join us as we participate in the LWVUS Money in Politics Study. Heidi is hosting us at her house.
Mon, Feb 29		Early Voting begins at selected sites. Early voting ends on March 14.



How can you support our League?

Please consider doing your part this month to support League.

- Ask a neighbor or friend to come to a meeting (and then ask them to join!).
- Buy Manna cards for your holiday gifts and support League. Contact Rosemary at 847-398-7812. Orders are due by December 1st (order forms will be at the November program). Check out <http://www.mannaexpress.net/merchant-list.html>
- What other organization are you involved with that might work with League to further our mission?
- Get one business to advertise in our newsletter. Solicitation letters are available at Heidi Graham's front porch at 1219 East Woodford Place.
- Obtain signatures for the Independent Map Amendment-the member who gets the most signatures will get a night in Heidi's Chicago Condo.
- Attend at least one event this month.
- Like us on Facebook (or tell your family members to like us!) Find us on Twitter.
- Sign up to be on a committee: Metropolis Movie Night, Mock Elections, Membership, Vote 411 (local candidate database), or marketing. Contact a board member today!

Independent Map Amendment:

The October presentation by Christopher Butler of the Independent Map Amendment was interesting and informative. The full program is available for view at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ph5qKLF-ikA>. Highlights of the presentation are:

- The current system of allowing the legislators to draw their maps is broken. Anytime matters of such importance are left to drawing out of a hat (yes, you read that correctly, many times the process is determined by drawing out of a hat), something must change.
- Every ten years, districts are re-drawn. In the last two cycles the party (democrats) in power has drawn the line to ensure they will continue to be elected. In the end, this places the power in the hands of lobbyists instead of in the hands of voters where it belongs.
- The last map amendment passed was shot down by the state Supreme Court. The Independent Map Amendment has worked carefully to ensure this proposal meets judicial muster.
- The goal is to place the amendment on the November ballot. To be included on the ballot, a minimum of 300,000 signatures are needed. In order to address the likelihood that signatures will be contested and thrown out, the organization has set a goal of collecting 600,000 signatures by January.
- There is opposition and the opposition looks surprisingly like Independent Map Amendment. To counteract this opposition and to educate voters in time for the November election, the plan is to shift focus from collecting signatures to education sooner rather than later. Again, January of 2016.
- We can help by collecting signatures. Board members have extra petitions and they are available on the site <http://www.mapamendment.org/index.html>. Note the petition must be printed double sided, only registered voters can sign (and can only sign once), and the only acceptable abbreviations are Dr., St., Pl., etc. and IL. *Arl. Hts. is not acceptable.*

Cook County Matters:

Our next program will be on November 19 at the Arlington Heights Museum. Presenter Cynthia Schilsky will explain "Cook County Matters." Did you know that Cook County government has a budget of \$4.5 billion? Where does the money come from to pay for this? Property taxes? Which elected official of Cook County has the largest budget? What are some of the "hot topics" that voters should be watching for over the next year? The answers may surprise you, but you will get the answers to these and other questions, you may have. The doors will open at 7 and the program will begin at 7:30.

Metropolis Movie Night:

For our January 18th program, to celebrate Martin Luther King, Jr. day, we are pleased to announce a special partnership with Metropolis Theatre. Metropolis Theatre has agreed to host a movie viewing of "Selma" at no charge. Doors will open at 6pm for cocktails and there will be mingling until 6:45. At 6:45 we will introduce our movie and pitch membership to League. The movie will begin at 7pm and afterwards we hope to have a Q & A with Daily Herald movie critic Dann Gire. We need League members to attend, bring friends, and get the word out. It is essential to this fledgling relationship with Metropolis we have a good showing of attendance. Additionally, we need the following:

- Hosts to mingle and push membership
- volunteers to contact legislators to attend
- volunteers to provide cold appetizers
- volunteers to provide desserts

Informal outings planned:

In addition to these formal events, we have some informal outings planned.

- On Friday November 13 at 8pm, join members for a viewing of the documentary "70 Acres in Chicago" about Cabrini Green at the Gene Siskel Film Center at 164 North State Street. Several members are taking the train and some will be driving. Contact a board member if you would like to attend. <http://genesiskelfilmcenter.pfestore.com/capacity/events/710c5d7e-e73f-439a-98c3-0074cf199fd2.aspx>
- On Sunday, November 15, we will have a casual outing to AMC Randhurst to see the movie "Suffragette." Please contact Heidi Graham at 847-687-2497 if you are interested in attending. Movie times are not yet posted.

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A Veteran's Day Story: A Homecoming 62 Years in the Making by Heidi Graham

I am Heidi Noel Hoblit, granddaughter of Noel Elmer Hoblit. In the last year, I have been involved in the incredible homecoming of my grandfather, and it has only taken 62 years to finally lay him to rest.

On November 22, 1952, my grandfather was aboard a transport plane traveling from McCord AFB in Washington to Elmendorf AFB in Alaska. Aboard the C-124 transport plane were 52 service members, representing all 4 branches of the military. The plane experienced some unknown difficulty, most likely

weather, and crashed into Mt. Garnet on Surprise Glacier in Alaska. A search party was able to land and determine that there were no survivors, but bad weather prevented the plane from ever being recovered.

In 2012, 60 years after the crash that killed my grandfather and all of the other service men aboard, the wreckage began to reveal itself, and JPAC (Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command) dispatched a team. In 2014, remains were recovered and positively identified as those of Col. Noel Elmer Hoblit.

In October of 2014, I had the great honor of traveling to JPAC headquarters at Pearl Harbor to be part of the group that escorted the remains of my grandfather to Washington, DC. On May 21st of this year, on what would have been my grandparents' 83rd wedding anniversary, my grandfather was finally laid to rest beside my grandmother, his beloved Ginia, in Arlington National Cemetery. The service was everything I hoped for and more. My brother-in-law, a decorated retired Army Command Sergeant Major, carried the remains through the Old Post Chapel, and then the chaplain brought most of us to tears with a moving memorial. My father and his brother, who were just 16 and six years old when their father died, walked, in the gentle rain, behind the horse-drawn carriage that transported the urn to the graveside. At the graveside, a full military band serenaded the mourners, and, while the honor guard carefully folded the flag, a lone bag piper played Amazing Grace. My father and his brother, both West Point graduates and career Air Force men, saluted their father one final time, as the bugle player played Taps.

As a military brat, I am certainly patriotic and believe we live in the greatest country on Earth. I am honored to be a part of The League of Women Voters because it helps make our great democracy work. This experience has left me feeling such gratitude for a nation that does not leave its soldiers or citizens behind. If you are interested in more of the story, I created a video about retrieving my grandfather's remains (<https://vimeo.com/111035102>), and I host a site that has many photos and links about this story (<https://noelhoblitreturnshome.shutterfly.com>).

In a letter to my grandmother, my grandfather once wrote "there would be far more contentment and happiness in the world if everybody loved this way." On the 83rd anniversary of Noel's marriage to Ginia, the day he was finally laid to rest beside the love of his life, my family is content in the love that is his legacy.

NEWS FROM LWV Cook County



Budget:

Cook County's 2016 proposed budget is \$4.5 billion, up from \$4 billion in 2015. Most of the projected revenues to cover the increase of \$500 million in expenditures from 2015 come from the increase in the County's Sales Tax to 1.75% that was passed by the County Board in July (to be effective January 1, 2016). Additionally funds come from the increase in revenues to the Health and Hospitals System (HHS) as a result of the Affordable Care Act, and the expansion of Medicaid. The increase in Sales Tax revenues will not be realized, however until 4 months after the start of fiscal 2016 (which is December 1, 2015). The President, Toni Prekwinkle, is also proposing to increase revenues by eliminating current exemptions from the County's Amusement Tax. The result would mean recreational activities such as golf and bowling, along with in-home paid cable television, would be taxed, bringing in an estimated \$20 million more. Note that the Amusement Tax would only apply to the television portion of the cable bill, and not the costs for any Internet or telephone service on the bill.

Lunch and Learn-The Independent Inspector General:

Patrick Blanchard, the Cook County Independent Inspector General (IIG) was the featured speaker at the LWVCC August 6 "Lunch and Learn." He spoke to about 50 League members and their guests about the mission and function of the office of the IIG.

Highlights from his talk include:

- The Mission of the office is to detect, deter and prevent corruption, fraud, waste, mismanagement, unlawful political discrimination, and misconduct in the operation of Cook County government.

- The office has a budget of around \$1.8 million and 20 positions (one administrative assistant and the rest investigators)
- Mr. Blanchard is the first IIG appointed under a County ordinance passed in 2007 and is now in his second 6-year term.
- The importance of the office being "Independent" was stressed.
- Under the County ordinance the jurisdiction of the office encompasses all of Cook County government, though not all County elected officials accept the jurisdiction. At the present time an Appellate Court ruling is pending concerning Cook County Assessor compliance with an investigation.
- As there also are questions about the IIG jurisdiction over the Cook County officials who are part of the Illinois judicial system (including the offices of the State's Attorney, Clerk of the Court, and the Chief Judge) Mr. Blanchard has proposed an amendment to the Illinois Code which would clarify the jurisdiction of all county inspector generals over all county officials whose offices are funded in whole or in part by the applicable county's budget.
- The office receives about 500 plus contacts/complaints each year from the public and from County employees. Since 2009, the IIG also has the authority to initiate cases based on reasonable suspicion.
- Following an investigation, the office refers what they consider to be criminal matters to the appropriate federal or state office. Reports on issues that are not criminal will be sent to the President and the appropriate County manager for follow-up.
- The office also conducts "institutional reviews" of departments looking for inefficiencies and waste.
- The office is also charged with making sure that the County is complying with the Shakman decree, a series of Federal court orders regarding government employment in Chicago, in response to a lawsuit filed by civic reformer Michael Shakman. The decrees barred the practice of political patronage and established that government employees may not be fired for not supporting a favored candidate or party. The IIG works closely with the court appointed monitors.



NEWS FROM LWV Upper Mississippi River Region

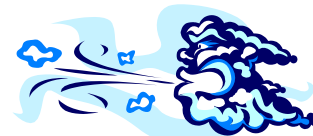
The LWVUMRR had its first annual meeting on October 24. At press time, no details from the meeting were available. The participants were able to play a watershed game. If you (your kids or grandkids) want to check out an online version of the game, go to <http://www.waterrocks.org>.



NEWS FROM LWVIL

The following issues were summarized in a report found on the LWVIL website (from October 2015): <http://files.ctctcdn.com/f257eb8e001/25c2eede-b4a8-4b54-8b2f-85dc0ddd89f7.pdf> Full explanations of related bills can be found at <http://www.ilga.gov>

Climate Change - Air Quality



In the wake of the Volkswagen emissions scandal, the EPA has announced stricter testing on all vehicles. Additionally, The Illinois Pollution Control Board has announced new rules to combat sulfur dioxide and carbon dioxide pollution from two coal plants in the Pekin area.

Climate Change - Energy



League is following two bills, House Bill 2607 and Senate Bill 1485, that will begin to establish Illinois Clean Jobs Plan to meet the goals set forth by the US EPA and the federal Clean Power Plan.

The US Supreme Court is hearing arguments challenging the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission's demand-response rule. Energy providers claim the Federal requirement that consumers be compensated for reducing energy usage during peak load times violates the individual states' right to set their own regulations.

Customers may be eligible for rebates for installing a SMART thermostat (not the same as a PROGRAMMABLE thermostat). Editor's note: The report indicated Northern Illinois residents were eligible but I could find nothing that specified the address of the energy customer. For more information visit <http://elpc.org/SmartThermostats/> For the ComEd site go to <https://www.comed.com/home-savings/rebates/Pages/default.aspx>



Criminal Justice:

HB2569 updates the admonishment instructions given to defendants so that defendants are properly educated on the consequences of pleading guilty to a crime. It passed the House and is on its 3rd reading in the Senate with a deadline of October 20. Editor's Note: There are no updates on the state website past October 10.

HB 494, which removes lifetime bars to employment in the schools for individuals with old drug, prostitution and public indecency convictions died after the Governor's amendatory veto.

The Safer Foundation CARRE conference was held earlier this month. Some highlights from the conference:

- Currently Illinois has 30,000 open manufacturing jobs. With help, citizens being released from the criminal justice system could fill these jobs.
- Senator Durbin spoke briefly about Smarter Sentencing Act, S.502/H.R.920 which rolls back some of the "draconian" federal sentencing rules. Additionally, John Cabello, a member of the Governor's Commission and a state representative, said it is taking a holistic approach to reform, not simply focusing on how to reduce the prison population. Bridget Gainer, Cook County Commissioner, addressed the need for changing the current attitudes toward the homeless (currently 22,000 homeless students in Chicago), the impoverished, and former inmates. Editor's note: The report consistently uses the language "returning citizens" when mentioning former inmates. I find the language unclear. Additionally, I would be interested in further information about why the CURRENT unemployed are not being tapped to fill these open jobs.
- Healthcare has 600,000 job opportunities and the industry is expected to experience 20% growth. Courtney Kelledees of Cabrini Green Legal Aid noted that although former inmates face long term legal barriers to health care jobs, "health care worker waivers" can grant access for them and anyone can help a former inmate complete this waiver.

Healthcare:



- Enrollment period for the ACA (Affordable Care Act) for 2016 is from 11/1/15 thru 1/31/16.
- The Kaiser Family Foundation's latest Employer Health Benefit Survey shows that in 2015 premiums for employer sponsored health insurance increased about 4% (a moderate growth) and deductibles have risen sharply.
- The Healthcare Right of Conscience Act, SB1564, passed the Senate April 22nd. The bill remains in the House and the deadline has been extended to October 31st. This bill is an amendment to the "Healthcare Right of Conscience Act." The purpose is to give healthcare providers an opportunity to refuse to perform, assist, etc. a procedure they conscientiously object to providing it does not adversely

impact the patient.

<http://www.ilga.gov/legislation/BillStatus.asp?DocNum=1564&GAID=13&DocTypeID=SB&SessionID=88&GA=99>

Social Policies:

- The budget impasse has affected many state programs.
- The Field Committee of the Responsible Budget Coalition has continued to arrange many legislator visits around Illinois to let the legislators understand more fully the need for a responsible budget. League has maintained the 3 Guiding Principles of the RBC:
 1. Adequate revenue to support state priorities and make smart investments
 2. No more cuts to vital programs and services
 3. Fairness in raising revenue and making any cuts caused by failure to raise adequate revenue

Sustainable Food and Water

- Sheri Latash was the LWVIL delegate to the new Upper Mississippi River Region ILO at its October 23- 24 meeting in Dubuque, IA. The ILO was formed around the need to reduce the amount of nitrate-nitrogen and phosphorus flowing into the Mississippi River, the nutrients responsible for creating the hypoxic zone in the Gulf of Mexico. Reducing nutrient loss is an LWVIL action focus this year.
- As of October 10, IL SB 734, the Labeling of Genetically Engineered Food, is back in the Assignments Committee.
- The anticipated closure of up to half of Illinois' state soil and water conservation district offices and the IL Department of Agriculture's Bureau of Land and Water was averted at the 11th hour by partial funding, according to an IL Farm Bureau representative.

Water



- Illinois Senator Mark Kirk has signed on as a cosponsor of SB 1140, a response to the expansion of the Clean Water Act. This bill would shift some of the regulatory powers for clean water from the federal government to the states and likely weaken clean water protections. League has asked Senator Kirk to take his name off the bill.
- At the state level, IL State Senator Laura Fine is the sponsor of HB 2401, Coal Tar Sealant Use and Sale Prohibited. Editor's note: Coal Tar Sealants are the planned topic of April's program. Stay tuned.

Finally, in a letter to the editor dated October 20, League president, Mary Kubasak, praised the non-partisan bill which mandates Civics education but urged our state representatives to work together to end the budget impasse. Read her full letter at http://www.lwvil.org/uploads/1/5/9/8/15985276/budget_impasse_long_version_website.pdf In response to this letter, and letters sent by other interest groups, Governor Rauner has set a meeting on November 18 with Speaker Madigan, President Cullerton, Leader Durkin and Leader Radogno to publicly discuss the budget impasse. Read Governor Rauner's full letter at http://www.lwvil.org/uploads/1/5/9/8/15985276/rauner_letter.pdf

NEWS FROM LWVUS



New Leader:

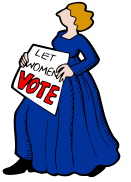
League of Women Voters has a new leader. In an introductory letter, new President Wylecia Wiggs Harris states she "wanted an organizational home committed to principles that are important to me – inclusion and empowerment. And, I wanted to help protect the fundamental right to vote that my foremothers and forefathers made so many sacrifices to attain." Harris states that "change can be challenging," but that she is excited to help League "grow into our second century." To read her full introductory letter go to <http://lwv.org/blog/building-league-legacy-and-embracing-future>

Vote 411:

Make sure your family, friends, and neighbors know about vote411.org. This handy online tool, created by League, offers voters an opportunity to create a personalized ballot. Editor's Note: You can help our League by being on the Vote.411 committee to create a personalized ballot for local elections. Contact a board member Heidi Graham for more information.

"Suffragette:"

Elizabeth MacNamara wrote about a special screening of the movie "Suffragette" in Georgia. "Suffragette" highlights the battle for voting rights in Great Britain. She notes that some key differences between the American suffrage movement and the movement in Great Britain should be underscored. By 1912, when the movie is set, American women had more rights over her property and children than in Great Britain. Finally, MacNamara states, "Movies like *Suffragette* connect voting rights to the plight of those who cannot vote. In a time of great cynicism about politics and apathy among voters, the movie serves as a good reminder to look back and remember what life was like for those once excluded from the political process." Editor's note: Remember to join League members at a "Suffragette" movie outing on Sunday November 15.



Constitutional Amendment Study:

The founding fathers created two ways in which the constitution can be amended in Article V. Congress, by a two-thirds vote of both chambers, may propose constitutional amendments to the states for ratification. Or, the legislatures of two-thirds of the states (34 at present) may ask Congress to call a convention to propose amendments to the Constitution; this is commonly called an Article V Convention. Amendments proposed by either method must be ratified by three-fourths of the states, 38 at present. Only the first method has ever been successful. The fastest amendment to pass was 18 year old suffrage, all other amendments have taken a year or longer. Currently there is public pressure to amend the constitution because of the Citizens United case (money in politics) and having a balanced federal budget.

League posits: What are the other values that League members share regarding the purpose of the Constitution and its malleability?" Many believe the Constitution to be a near-sacred document, only to be amended in the most serious circumstances. Do we agree? Under what circumstances is it appropriate to amend the Constitution? What makes a sound and well-crafted amendment proposal? League presents two papers, one outlining the case FOR constitutional amendments and the other AGAINST.

Professor Adrian Vermeule, Professor of Law at the University of Chicago in 2004, poses arguments in favor of constitutional amendments in a paper titled "Constitutional Amendments and the Constitutional Common Law." (The full text is available <http://www.law.uchicago.edu/files/files/73-av-amendments.pdf>) He argues that amendments make the constitution clearer, less political, legitimizes the court, and involves more diverse participants than the current system.

In 2001, Kathleen Sullivan, a former Dean of the Stanford School of Law, practicing lawyer, and once considered for the US Supreme Court, wrote a paper entitled "Constitutional Amendmentitis." (The full text is available <http://prospect.org/article/constitutional-amendmentitis>) In her paper, Kathleen presents the arguments against constitutional amendments. The amendments that have passed have done little to change the "pristine" nature of the document. She further argues that the constitution provides stability, and acts as a barrier between the political and judicial process (amendments would erode this). Further, she argues amendments can have unintended and unforeseen consequences, change the purposeful generality of the constitution, and undermine the ability of the court to interpret the document.

The issues currently being studied and a consensus taken by League is in three parts: How an amendment should be evaluated, the pros and cons of a Constitutional Convention, and how League should act. Note, this in regarding the amendment PROCESS and not a specific amendment. Furthermore, our local League is NOT participating (we do not currently have the resources to participate adequately). If you would like to read more about the study or look more closely at the consensus questions, please go to <http://forum.lww.org/member-resources/article/constitutional-amendment-study-guide>

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FIRST CLASS MAIL

See you on Thursday, November 19!

In this issue:

Page 1

Activity Calendar

Page 2

News from Our League

Page 3

Your Local Board

Veterans Day Tribute

Page 4

News from LWV Cook County

Page 5

News from LWV Upper Mississippi River Region

News from LWVIL

Page 7

News from LWVUS

Page 9

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