

The Chicago Voter

League of Women Voters of Chicago
Website - www.LWVChicago.org

May 2008
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Dates To Remember

Meetings held at the
League Office
Unless otherwise
Noted

To check on committee
meetings- call the office.

No Briefings

Unit meetings on Page 3

Executive Committee
Meeting
Monday, June 2nd
At the call of the
President

LWVCC
Visit the County Board of
Commissioners
118 N. Clark St.
9:30 am

Regular Board
Meeting
Monday June, 9th
5:30 pm

LWVIL
Membership
Recruitment
Meeting
June 10th - 10:00 am

ANNUAL MEETING
Saturday, June 21st
4th Floor
Conference Room
332 S. Michigan
Ave.
9:30 am - 12:30 pm

President's Column

Dear League Members:

What words are suitable to show our appreciation to all who worked so hard to make the State of the City luncheon a success? Thank you doesn't seem to be enough. We "sold out the room" and had some exceedingly large donations from sponsors to raise money for the Education Fund. We must recognize the co-chairs: Clara Fleming and Bernice Fortini who worked endlessly (so it seemed) writing letters, making calls, writing more letters and calling again in order to get the corporate participation we needed. They developed the program and directed their co-workers to produce this special event. Working many hours at home or in the office were other who wrote, called and gave advice: Past presidents: Daphne Daume and Emelda Estell; Leslie Corbett, who encouraged Lisa Snow to be Corporate Chair; Pat Graunke, new to the LWV, helped with reservations; Helene Gabelnick and Joyce Haeckel our computer and website specialists; Ann Logue, who did public relations; Bev Meyer our seating arranger; Norma Braude, Winnie Slusser and Lois Snyder, board members. Reikia Carrothers, our intern from Robert Morris College, worked diligently in the office. She graduates in a few weeks and we wish her much success. The Program Book was put together by Bernice, with text by Helene and the lay-out was done by John Juskevics, Millie's husband. To all the League members who bought tickets or made a donation, we really appreciate your devotion to the organization.

Our annual meeting is scheduled for Saturday, June 21st from 9:30 am to 12:30 pm. It will be held in the Main Conference Room of the building, 4th floor in order to keep costs down. The agenda include voting on the Slate of Officers and Directors plus the Nominating Committee; the approval of the Operating Fund Budget; and the giving of the Greensfelder-Elam Award, plus plans for next year. There will be no speaker, this is a working meeting. Please come.

This year when you renew your membership, please pay attention to what is asked for on the form. I understand that people are reluctant to give their phone numbers and e-mail addresses. THE LWV DOES NOT GIVE OUT THIS INFORMATION. The other levels or League share these numbers, but it is all confidential. If we have a League position at some level of government that we would like you to support or oppose, sending a letter no longer gives adequate time for a response. As a grassroots organization, the elected officials MUST hear from YOU. We need your political address as well.

The Children's Museum

Statement to Chicago Plan Commission

May 15, 2008

The League of Women Voters of Chicago is opposed to the construction of the Chicago Children's Museum in Grant Park. Our opposition to this proposed site is based on positions that our members have confirmed many times. We believe that the parks should be used for public recreation only, consistent with and enhancing the aesthetic quality of the parks. Buildings should be kept to a minimum. Plans for the parks should ensure adequate pedestrian access to the parks and lakefront and leave the lakefront free of obstacles such as buildings and roads that would interfere with the open lakefront.

Grant Park should remain a public ground, open and available to the public. It should not be whittled away for private use. It is important that Grant Park provide residents and visitors a variety of experiences. These experiences should include open space available for reflection and rest. The proposed Children's Museum with its skylights would insert a building into the park with obstacles that would impair the public's access to park space.

Today much of Grant Park is filled with activity. Millennium Park draws millions of visitors each year. The Pritzker Pavilion is the scene of concerts and performances. The Gospel, Blues and Jazz Fests take place in Grant Park and for ten days each summer the *Taste of Chicago* draws a million people to Grant Park. There are ball fields and tennis courts as well. All these activities are available to the public at no entrance charge. The proposed location for the Children's Museum conflicts with public space. It does so through admittance fees and through funding its construction by soliciting funds in exchange for naming rights.

Locating the Chicago Children's Museum in Grant Park will, inevitably, lead to prolonged and costly litigation. A century ago the Illinois Supreme Court affirmed the mandate that Grant Park remain clear of buildings and obstructions. The League of Women Voters of Chicago urges the Chicago Park

District and the City of Chicago to recognize their obligation to comply with settled law and deny permission to relocate the Children's Museum in Grant Park.

Therefore, we urge the Plan Commission to reject the proposed site for the Children's Museum in Grant Park.

Contrary to our testimony, the Plan Commission passed the park site.

School Funding

LWVIL continues to push for adequate funding for our schools. It does not look as if anything will be done about it unless there is a great change in the Legislature.

An attempt to raise income taxes on the wealthy failed in the House.

The old SB and HB 750 bills seem to have been shelved, and the new SB2288, which is similar to 750 passed out of the committee, and seems to have been set aside until the fall.

- Property taxes are exorbitant and rising
- State pays 1/3 of cost, national average is 50%
- Illinois has the lowest overall income tax in the nation.
- Other big cities pay more per child than Chicago, our richer suburban districts pay twice as much, others less.
- Capital dollars have not come from Springfield in four years. Upgrading the schools, making them safe, warm and dry is expensive. If a year-round school is planned it must be air-conditioned as well or kids won't learn.
- It is impossible to prove necessary tutoring and after-school programs to close the achievement gap and keep kids safe in the afternoon.
- High schools especially need more money
- Education is the foundation of a strong economy and a strong future.

Our children need better funding, and LWVIL along with LWVChicago have been working for this objective it seems like forever.

Affordable Housing

Rental Housing Remains *Out of Reach* for Millions of Americans; National Housing Wage Jumps to \$17.32

NLIHC's *Out of Reach 2007- 2008*, released April 7, reports that the national Housing Wage—the hourly wage a full-time worker must earn to afford a modest two-bedroom home in his or her community—for 2008 is **\$17.32**, while the average wage for all workers is **\$16.00** and the estimated wage for the average renter is just \$13.94, according to the report. The national Housing Wage is up from \$16.31 in the last *Out of Reach* report, and is nearly 36% higher than the comparable number for 2000. The report also finds that in 2008 a full-time (40 hours a week/52 weeks a year) minimum wage worker still cannot afford even a one-bedroom apartment **in any jurisdiction in the country** at the Fair Market Rent.

There is a National Housing Justice Movement, a project of the National Training and Information Center (NTIC) under way. They believe the struggle over housing for low-income communities of color is basically tied to the struggle against gentrification and for community control. It calls for stopping the displacement of low-income communities of color. It seeks to reverse punitive policies against low-income tenants (1-strike evictions). It wishes to expand the right to organize in public housing. It asks the federal investment to increase funding for housing for low-income families by expanding section 8 funding.

Call your senators and ask them to support S 2523 and include the Kerry-Snowe National Affordable Housing Trust Fund Act in the bill.

Lois Snyder

LWVUS

The League of Women Voters of the United States is seriously concerned with the Supreme Court decision to uphold the restrictive requirement for Photo ID in the Indiana case. It has already been proven to disenfranchise those who; should be allowed to vote (elderly nuns who did not possess such ID were turned away) Even if there were no cost for the photograph, the time and effort necessary to obtain this kind of identification is hardest on the elderly and the handicapped.

UNIT MEETINGS

The May and June meetings of the LWV Units may present programs or have a final luncheon. Contact the Unit Leaders for more information.

Unit 1/5 – Downtown – (evening) – League Office
May 26th at 5:30 PM
Education Presentation
Unit Leader: Margaret Herring

Unit 9/11 – West Side (central) - Contact
Unit Leader: Joan Morton

Unit 21/35 – North Side
Contact Unit Leaders
Education Presentation
Bettina Schwartz or
Carol Westerlund

Unit 22 – Downtown - Daytime – League Office
Usually on a Wednesday at 10:00 am
At the League office
Unit Leader – Bernice Fortini

Unit 41/42 – Southwest Side
Saturday, June 7 at 10 am
Walker Branch Public Library
11071 S. Hoyne
Education Presentation
Contact Betsy Perrine

Unit 66/74 – Hyde Park Area – Day Meeting:
Annual Luncheon Meeting
Saturday, June 14th
Montgomery Place at 12:00 PM.
Unit Leader - Dorothy Scheff

STATE OF THE CITY 2008
Luncheon

Thanks to the effort of many members of the Chicago League, a successful luncheon was held on May 2, 2008 at the Union League Club. The event assembled two hundred guests to hear the panel made up of Representative Julie Hamos, Frank Beal, Executive Director of Chicago Metropolis 2020 and Laurence Msall, President of the Civic Federation expound on Mass Transit and its great importance to the city of Chicago. The Moderator for the discussion was Mike Flannery, Political Editor for CBS Channel 2.

A Civic Contribution award was given to Sister Patricia Crowley, O.S.B. for her work with homeless women through Deborah's Place and Housing Opportunities and Maintenance for the Elderly (H.O.M.E.) and to Jacky Grimshaw, Vice President for Policy, Transportation and Community Development for the Center for Neighborhood Technology.

The Corporate Chair was Lisa Snow, Managing Director, Huron Consulting Group. Sponsoring organizations were Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Illinois, Exelon, Huron Consulting Group, ABC 7 Chicago, Amalgamated Transit Union, Chicago Board of Elections, Northern Trust Bank, Regional Transportation Authority, and the Union League Club of Chicago.

Individual sponsors were Ms Leslie Corbett, Ms Margaret Herring, and Mr. and Mrs. Tom Kallen.

The Chicago League sprang back into its rightful place among women's organizations after several years without a State of the City Event. The latest edition of **Guide to Local Government**, which is designed as a real source of information, was distributed as a program book.

Clara Fleming and Bernice Fortini, Co-Chairs for the State of the City Committee

Annual meeting

Come to the Annual Meeting on Saturday, June 21st to be held in the Conference Room of the Building, 332 S. Michigan Avenue.

LWVChicago has done this in order to bring the cost down to \$10.00 per member. After the fabulous event of the State of the City Luncheon, we felt that asking members to pay for yet another meal would be counter-productive with a new fiscal year in July.

This will be a working meeting. We do not have Program Planning, but we will sent our emphasis for the next year. We must elect Officers members of the Board of Directors as well as the Nominating Committee for next year. The Operating Budget must be adopted. Unfortunately we are proposing a dues increase to meet the increases made by LWVCook County and LWVUS.

The flyer for this affair is included in this Voter.

Membership

Those who are interested in helping increase LWV membership, please attend a meeting on Tuesday, June 10th, at 10:00 am in the Conference Room. Valerie Krejciec, LWVIL, will present a program based on the LWVUS Membership Recruitment Initiative. Leave a message for Bernice or Esta on the voice mail if you plan to attend.

<i>The Chicago Voter</i>	
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