



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF EVANSTON

THE INTERCOM

MAY - JUNE 2010

Annual Meeting Features Evanston Perspective

by Elizabeth Hayford

A League of Women Voters priority is to examine and improve local government. The Evanston League Annual Meeting on May 13 reflected this priority with the adoption of a new Local Program for 2010-2011 and an analysis of current Evanston issues by new City Manager Wally Bobkiewicz.



Mr. Bobkiewicz expressed enthusiasm for Evanston and for the League, revealing that the invitation to speak at the Annual Meeting was the first speaking engagement he accepted after arriving in Evanston. He reported some dismay at the extent of the projected budget shortfall that became apparent during the Fall budget hearings, and explained his work with the newly elected City

Council to set priorities for government attention. The Council identified a dozen priorities, led by the need for economic development, affordable housing and a better budget process, including both the operating budget and the capital budget. More efficient and effective government services, along with a climate action plan, putting the police and fire pensions on a stable basis, and establishing better relations with the federal and state governments and Northwestern were other key issues.

Mr. Bobkiewicz also thanked the League for its work analyzing city boards and commissions and explained that efforts to implement the recommendations are continuing. He also pledged greater transparency in government actions and praised

the League commitment to observing and reporting on Council and key committee meetings.

The annual meeting also brought members up to date on the strong financial status of the League, passed a budget for 2010-2011, and elected officers for the coming year. Two local program topics, Housing Foreclosures in Evanston and the Evanston City Budget, were approved as priority issues for action and education. President-elect Susan Black expressed the appreciation of the board and all members for the leadership of President Karen Hunt for the past two years, and presented Karen with a gift of wine and a Williams-Sonoma gift certificate, reflecting hope that Karen will have more time to enjoy cooking, one of her favorite pastimes, when she steps down as President.



LWVE Officers 2010-2011

- President** Susan Black
 - Vice President Local Program** Betty Hayford
 - Treasurer** Voula Moragiannis
 - Secretary** Kim Hoopingarner
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 - Local Government/Observer Corps** Jessie Feldman
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 - Communications Managing Editor** Melissa Leasia
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 - Member-at-Large** Diane DiFrancesco
 - Nominating Committee** Janet Kittlaus & Judy Hoffman
(along with third member appointed by the Board)
- #### Off-Board Roles
- Office Coordinator** Katy Compere Pendleton
 - Membership Database Administrator** Janet Kittlaus
 - Intercom Editor** Helen Gagel

President's Letter

A couple of weeks ago I attended a benefit for an Evanston organization with a fellow League member at the invitation of yet *another* League member. When getting on the elevator, commenting on our hostess, I stated, "She has saved my hide this year." (For those of you who know me well, this is loosely translated). On emerging from the elevator, our hostess beckoned us and on introducing me stated "I have saved this woman's hide all year." Truer words, as they say, have never been spoken – or reiterated. But to list all the people who have "saved my hide" over these last two years would take far more room than I have.

This President's letter is a thank you to all who have helped me, encouraged me, consoled me and above all, saved my hide. I have worked with two boards who have forgiven my lapses in parliamentary procedure, worked with changed meeting times and supported me through all. **To all of you – thank you.** To the members of the local government committee who have worked diligently to inform us about our local government – thank you. To Helen Gagel and Julie Winsberg, the editor and producer of the "Intercom", my thanks for your patience – I have never met a deadline I liked. To the special people who were there for counsel and special projects, my sincere appreciation. To all of the people who worked on everything from the Ed Fund Community Dinner to the Phonathan to holiday wrapping – thank you. For every cook and hostess who participated in the Progressive Dinner – thank you. To the wonderful members who make sure the League's office runs efficiently – thank you. To each of you who wanted one more broadcast E-Mail – I'm sorry. To each of you who wanted one less broadcast E-Mail – I'm sorry. All of you have helped make the League stronger, more visible and hopefully, with continued work, increasingly relevant in our community.

Ten years ago I joined the League of Women Voters. I wanted to learn more about government, policy and issues. I wanted to become a better citizen. The idiosyncrasies of the League confused me. What exactly was the difference between local program and monthly meetings? What was the Ed Fund? What were studies? What were all these procedures and processes for? Over my ten years I have learned many answers, still have many questions and remain mystified by certain practices I shall categorize as sacred cows. But one thing I am dead sure on. The League of Women Voters fills an incredibly important role in our city, county, state and country and I am so glad I joined. I am a better person and citizen for having been in the League.

In this issue, you will read about the meetings and events that have been keeping us busy over the last two months. Our programs and activities evidence the League's continued efforts to educate and support the community. I know that Susan Black, our next President, will do a great job. I know this because of her talent and dedication, but also because of all of you, who will be behind the scenes "saving her hide."

My best to all – see you soon at a League function!
- Karen



League of Women Voters of Evanston

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Office E-Mail: lwvevanston@att.net

Web Site: www.lwve.org

2009-2010 Elected Officers

President	Karen Hunt
VP, Membership	Susan Black
VP, Local Programs	Betty Hayford
Treasurer	Voula Moragiannis
Secretary	Lynda Ancell

2009-2010 Elected Directors

Local Government Observer Corps	Nancy Bashook
Monthly Events	Mary Morris
Voter Service	Judy Hoffman
At Large Members	Gloria Callaci Diane DiFrancesco Jessie Feldman Karen Telser

Nominating Committee

Janet Kittlaus and Kathy Tate-Bradish

Off-Board Appointments

Newsletter	Helen Gagel Julie Winsberg
Office Coordinator	
Membership	Katy Compere Pendleton
Database	Janet Kittlaus
Membership Directory	Diane Korling
LWVIL Phonathan	Helen Heyrman
Progressive Dinner	Ellen Browne

THE INTERCOM

May - June 2010 Vol. 88, No. 14

THE INTERCOM is the newsletter of the
League of Women Voters® of Evanston.

LWV – PTA Council Event Considers the Plight of Homeless Children in Evanston

– by Elizabeth Hayford

On April 28, the League of Women Voters of Evanston and the District 65 PTA Council co-sponsored a discussion about the state of homeless children in Evanston schools. The meeting—held at the North Shore Retirement Hotel, drew more than 60 attendees. As well as outlining the current situation, the panel described continuing needs and funding problems, now exacerbated by the state's financial crisis.

Tom Bookler, Homeless Liaison for the North Suburban Cook County Regional Office of Education, outlined expectations for the schools created by federal and state legislation, as well as the efforts of the regional office to inform schools of their responsibilities and how teachers and staff can meet them. Representing District 65, Joyce Bartz and Judith Treadway described how schools identify homeless children through the registration process and teacher interaction with students, and how social workers and teachers work to help students succeed in school even when their home lives are precarious.

Don Baker, Executive Director of YOU (Youth Organizations Um-



brella) outlined services for older homeless children, and the importance of providing them with a stable situation that enables them to stay in school. Paul Selden, Executive Director of Connections for the Homeless, moderated the discussion, guiding the panel to cover many aspects of the topic in the limited time available. He also provided a broad perspective of the ongoing need to sensitize communities and government at all levels about the need to support these vulnerable youth to help them develop into productive adults.

The presentations informed an engaged audience about the extent of a consistent human problem faced even by prosperous communities like Evanston, made more challenging in the current economic recession. The most

intensive questions focused on what individuals could do to help, and panelists urged them to press elected officials for needed resources, and to volunteer to help Evanston agencies working with youth.

This event was planned by a group of League members who had studied the issue and identified the excellent panelists. Thanks to Nancy Bashook, Jessie Feldman, Betty Hayford, Karen Hunt, Voula Moragiannis, and Marge Wold.

The Politics of Aging: Whither Social Security & Medicare?

– by Mary Morris

This always-timely topic was addressed at a League breakfast meeting on March 16. Janet Witt, Grassroots Manager of the National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare, provided both historical and current data on the status of these two programs, which are regarded as among the most important social policy initiatives of the 20th Century.

Witt prefaced her remarks by saying that there are always two sides about how much government should be involved—a debate that is as old as our nation.

She explained that Social Security is a social insurance program designed to be a safety net with guaranteed benefits for recipients. It is an intergenerational transfer with inflation protection as well as disability benefits. A typical retiree will receive \$225,000 in lifetime benefits, which is equivalent to a \$414,000 disability insurance policy. More than two-thirds –

69% – of Social Security benefits go to retired persons, while 17% goes to people with disability and 14% to survivors.

Witt noted that, due to the impact of the recession on tax revenue, Social Security this year is paying out \$30 billion more than it is taking in. However, because Congress in 1980 increased the amount of tax revenue going into the Social Security Trust Fund (anticipating the now-imminent influx of Baby Boomers into the retiree population), the trust funds is fully funded through 2037. She stated her view that privatization is in actuality a plan to dismantle Social Security. She asserted that privatization would mean cuts in Social Security benefits with no guarantee that private investments could make up the difference in retirees' benefits.

Turning to Medicare, Witt explained that this legislation, passed by Congress in 1965, provides health insurance coverage for

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**Progressive Dinner Menu:
Lively Discussion
+ Delicious Dining =
Revenue for League Programs
and Advocacy**

More than 60 League members and supporters attended the LWVE's biennial Progressive Dinner on April 10. The event, organized by Ellen Browne, Helen Heyrman, Karen Hunt, Diane Korling and Katy Pendleton, raised \$3,325 for the League.

The evening began with a reception sponsored by Presbyterian Homes at the Westminster Place Assembly Hall, thanks to Helen Heyrman. Guests then dispersed to enjoy the main course at the homes of dinner hostesses Sue Calder, Gloria Callaci, Nina Donnelly, Judy Elsass, Michelle Jordan, Janet Otwell, Eleanor Revelle, and Mary Ann Weston. Attendees reported delicious food in addition to interesting and lively discussions.

Guests then reassembled at the home of Ann and Bernie Jennett for a wide assortment of tasty desserts provided by Susan Black, Sue Brenner, Diane DiFrancesco, Karen Hunt, Trink Newman, Virginia Rosenberg, and Gerri Sizemore.

2010-2011 LWVE Board of Directors



Front row, L-R: Nancy Bashook, Susan Black, Gloria Callaci.
Rear, L-R: Betty Hayford, Voula Moragiannis, Lynda Ancell, Kim Hoopingarner, Diane DiFrancesco, Melissa Leasia, Karen Hunt. Not pictured: Jessie Feldman.

Calendar of Events

All programs are free unless otherwise noted. For more information, call 847-866-7844 or visit Calendar updates at www.lwve.org

Tuesday, June 8 Luncheon Meeting
Panel Presentations: Sustainability Possibilities sponsored by LWVE
The Mather, 425 Davis Street in Evanston
Luncheon served at 12 noon. Panel discussion begins at 12:30 pm. Event goes until 1:30 pm. Panel of Sustainability Experts includes:
Carolyn Collopy, City of Evanston Sustainability Coordinator
Jeff Grossberg, President, Green World Alliance & SkySite
Joe Zajdel or Michael Carney, Mather Lifeways
The meeting is open to the public, including lunch. Cost \$15, payable at the door. RSVP to LWVE at 847.866.7844.

Tuesday, July 27 ~ 12 Noon
2010 Legislative Luncheon
North Shore Retirement Hotel, 1611 Chicago Ave, Evanston
Speakers: State Representative Robyn Gabel
State Senator Jeff Schoenberg
Watch the website for more details as they become available.

Wednesday, July 28 Luncheon Meeting
Cook County Health & Hospitals System sponsored by LWVCC
DePaul Club at the DePaul University Center, 11th Floor
William Batts, Chairman of the Board
William Foley, Chief Executive Officer
Meeting is open to the public and includes lunch. Cost \$30.
Contact the Cook County League for further details.

RSVP's help us plan. Please call us at 847-866-7844 to reserve your spot for upcoming presentations.



Mission Statement

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.

The Politics of Aging

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people 65 and older, those with certain diseases, and disabled people under 65.

In 2008, 44.1 million people were covered by Medicare. The original Medicare system includes Part A hospital care and part B, physician care. Part C is Medicare Advantage or managed care and Part D is the prescription drug benefit. Parts C&D are provided through insurance companies regulated by Medicare.

Can America afford Medicare? Among the challenges Witt cited are spending growth, improving value, protecting the most vulnerable beneficiaries, physician payments, the role of private plans, the prescription drug benefit and whether more benefits should be added.

In discussing health care reform, Witt stated one goal is to get



people healthier when they are young to hold down costs later. Health care goals are to slow the rising costs of health care; cover the uninsured, extend the life of the Medicare Trust Fund and to improve benefits.

Witt cited the cost issue as the most serious challenge. The United States has the most expensive health care in the world, and one out of every six people have no health insurance.

Health care spending is now at 16% of the nation's Gross Domestic Product. If nothing is done health care costs will grow faster than the economy. Cost containment in health care is critical to the Medicare program. If health care costs are not slowed down, Medicare cannot survive.

Witt urged everybody to get involved and to contact elected leaders noting that individuals can make a difference. More information is available at www.NCPSSM.org as well as the organization's legislative hotline: 800.998.0180.

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Cook County LWV to Scrutinize Special Purpose Funds

At the Annual Meeting of the League of Women Voters of Cook County on May 17, the delegates approved a one-year study on the Special Purpose Funds within Cook County's annual budget. These Special Purpose Funds are about 5% of the total \$3.57 billion budget, are under the control of a number of the elected officials, and cover the salaries of more than 1,000 of the almost 24,000 county employees.

The study group will be exploring the statutes and ordinances that set up these Special Purpose Funds, the sources of the revenues for these funds, and the pros & cons of having Special Purpose Funds. The study will focus more on policy than numbers.

The study will be getting underway this summer and study group members



will be compiling the background information in preparation for interviews with elected officials and high level county staff during the fall and winter. The expectation is that a report on the findings, possibly along with any recommended new position, will be ready for the 2011 LWVCC Annual Meeting.

LWCCC President Cynthia Schilsky invites interested members to attend the first meeting of this new study group. Tentative date is Sat., June 26 at the LWVIL office at 10 am. If you are interested:

- Call 312-939-5935 ext 27 or email: cook@lwvil.org
- Leave a message/email indicating your interest and include your name, address, phone number, e-mail address & applicable local league name
- Also indicate whether you are available this summer, or will have to join the study in the fall

You will be contacted prior to the first meeting date and a new meeting date and time may be set to accommodate participants.

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LWVE Membership News

Outgoing LWVE Membership Chair (and incoming President!) Susan Black asks us to welcome these new members:

Charles Hayford Andrea Steinberg Mary Lewis

Reminder: Renew Your Membership Now!

Membership renewal season is in full swing. You can expect to receive a membership renewal form in the mail any day now.

You can also renew your membership online at
www.lwve.org/membership.php

The 2010-11 Membership Directories will also be mailed out to members soon. Many thanks to Diane Korling, Janet Kittlaus, Maxine Lange and Lenore Weissman for all of their hard work on proofing the directory copy and particularly Diane Korling

who has been in charge of producing the membership directory. Bravo for a job well done!

PAYPAL: Make It Easy to Pay Your Dues

Have you renewed your membership in the Evanston League? It's never been easier to renew, now that Paypal is alive and kicking on the LWVE website. Please visit the membership page and renew your membership today!

www.lwve.org/membership.php

Do you know someone who might be considering membership in the Evanston League?

Prospective members can join on-line or you can email their contact information to lwveevanston@att.net and we will follow up with them.

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