



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF EVANSTON

THE INTERCOM

SUMMER 2011



Legislative Lunch: Report from Capitol Hill Tuesday, August 9 In Evanston

Will the federal government be in default? Or will the two houses and the White House have hammered out an agreement? Whatever the outcome of this summer's legislative drama, you will get a first-hand report at LWVE Legislative Lunch. Join us on Tuesday, August 9, to hear Rep. Jan Schakowsky's report on the Congressional session. We'll get underway at noon at the Unitarian Church of Evanston located at 1330 Ridge Avenue (corner of Greenwood and Ridge). We will be having catered box lunches from Food for Thought and the charge will be \$20.

To make a reservation, please phone the League office (847-866-7844) or send an email to lwvevanston@att.net. Please include the word "Reservation" in the subject line.

Cook County On the Move

– by Elizabeth Hayford

The League of Women Voters of Cook County held its annual meeting on May 16. Both the recap of league activities for the year, and the program featuring two Cook County Commissioners, demonstrated a period of vigorous and positive developments.

Cook County entered a new era at the end of 2010, when Toni Preckwinkle was elected President of the County Board and promised an administration of transparency and accountability and a county government focused on providing essential services in a cost effective manner. Attendees at the meeting received a progress report from two commissioners, Bridget Gainer (D) and Timothy Schneider (R). In spite of their different political parties, they agreed in a question and answer session that the Board of Commissioners was working more productively with its new president to focus on necessary services and reduce waste by eliminating unnecessary activities. New opportunities were being identified to reduce costs in the vital public safety and public health areas, and the new tone of honesty and respect could be the basis for addressing county needs more effectively.

To start the business meeting, President Cynthia Schilsky reminded the attendees that all members of local leagues in Cook County are members of the Cook County League, an Interleague Organization. The League continues to maintain an active Observer Corps attending County Board meetings, budget meetings, Health and Hospital Service and Forest Preserve meetings, and posting reports on the League web site, www.cookcounty.il.lwvnet.org. Vice-President Karin Hribar is

seeking additional volunteers to observe, in part because of the need to observe some of the key committee meetings.

Voter Service continued to work actively on voter education, providing candidate information online, and working with the County Clerk on voter audits. League officers maintained a program of Action and Advocacy, meeting with County Commissioners and staff, continuing efforts to have staff put the Organizational Chart posted on the County web site, and meeting with Toni Preckwinkle to present concerns about Board meeting procedures, the growing use of Special Purpose Funds, and our common interest in an open and accountable government process.

The four interest groups remain active in looking into important county issues and possible issues for advocacy: Budget and Structure, Health and Hospital Services, Juvenile Justice and Forest Preserve. They meet regularly to exchange information and learn from other knowledgeable individuals or groups, and welcome others with expertise or concerns to join them. Meeting times are posted on the LWVCC web site.

The proposed budget was passed, and the Treasurer Donna Moore declared the current financial position of the League is sound, thanks in part to the program of Lunch and Learn meetings introducing county officials and programs to members. The next session will be Monday, August 1, featuring Kurt Summers, Chief of Staff to President Toni Preckwinkle. League members throughout Cook County are encouraged to follow activities on the LWVCC web site, and local leagues are reminded to provide a representative to attend Board meetings and provide an active link between the Board and each local league.

President's Letter

The lazy days of summer have arrived and we are beginning our normal transition at the beginning of another fiscal year for the League of Women Voters of Evanston. At our annual meeting on May 19, the tide shifted from our previous practice of being constrained by Robert's Rules of Order in conducting the business meeting. We had an exceptionally memorable program presented by four LWVE members who were honored for their contributions to the human community. While each member's story was unique to her own circumstances, a strong common thread was building a phenomenal story about the power of involvement in the League of Women Voters. In retrospect, did I see parallels in the memorable stories presented last year at the LWVUS national convention, when past presidents of LWVUS shared their notable achievements with those in attendance in Atlanta. The story lines on May 19 were different but at the core shared how each LWVE member had become involved in the League's activities and how it changed their lives. The stories could best be summarized as powerful public relations for the work we do in our community. The day after it happened, I wanted to think of a way to build a press release to show other Evanston residents, that the League is far more than registering voters or running an effective candidates' forum. I will have to admit I missed the boat on creating the press release, however, I would like to ask members to think about new ways they can engage their friends and neighbors in our important work while keeping in mind how the League has impacted their lives.

Special thanks to the members of the budget committee (Karen Hunt, Judy Elsass, Virginia Rosenberg and Betty Hayford) for their extremely hard work in late April/early May in assembling the budget documents presented in the annual meeting packet.

On Saturday, June 11, at the LWVIL convention, we were also awarded a check in the amount of \$565 for our League's operating budget as a result of our work on March 22 during the LWVIL Ed Fund Phonathon. Thanks again to Cheryl Wollin and her team of dedicated volunteers who assisted during the convention and made the convention goodie bags a delightful surprise for each convention attendee.

All contributions by LWVE members are appreciated on a daily basis as I reflect each day on what I'm grateful for. I know the upcoming year will be even better. Please make sure you renew your membership dues now and I look forward to seeing you at the August 9 legislative lunch with Rep. Jan Schakowsky.

Have a fabulous summer!

Susan



League of Women Voters of Evanston

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2011-2012 Elected Officers

President	Susan Black
VP Local Programs	Elizabeth Kinney
VP Membership	Catherine Whitcomb
VP Communication	Melissa Leasia
Secretary	Eleanora DiLiscia
Treasurer	Elizabeth Hayford

2011-2012 Elected Directors

Local Government – Observer Corps
Jessie Feldman

Voter Service – Registration
Mary Morris

Voter Service – Forums
Kate Julian

Development Chair
Karen Hunt

Members - At - Large
Gloria Callaci Kim Hoopingarner

Nominating Committee
Elected Members

Karen Vroegh Judy Hoffman

Off-Board Appointments

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Intercom Newsletter
Helen Gagel Julie Winsberg

Office Coordinator
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Member Database Janet Kittlaus

Membership Directory Diane Korling

Member Interests Database
Andi Steinberg

THE INTERCOM

SUMMER 2011

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

The "Pack" Welcomes Krejcie Back!



L-R: Janet Kittlaus, Judy Elsass, Susan Black, Michelle Jordan
(Also in "the pack," but hidden by the sign is Cheryl Wollin.)

In the time honored tradition of LWVIL state conventions, the Evanston League welcomed Valerie Krejcie back from her very dedicated two-year term of service on the LWVIL state board working on Member Services. At a time when many Leagues are struggling to stay afloat around the state, it was Val's sheer dedication and enthusiasm that was so greatly appreciated by her colleagues on the LWVIL board.

We took the convention audience by storm to start out Sunday morning's session with Michelle Jordan's totally creative new rendition of the 60's song "**Leader of the Pack.**"

*We met her at the Evanston League
She moderated a debate you see
You get the picture? (yes, we see)
That's when we fell for (the leader of the pack)
Those Evanston folks were always putting her down (down, down)
They said she came from Skokie town
They told us she was mad...But we knew she was rad
That's why we elected her (the leader of the pack)
One day our Part-time Badger said "I want something new"
Her leaving left the Evanston League feeling blue
We didn't know just what we had
Til she joined the state board and how we were sad
That's why we are glad to get back our... Leader of the pack
We felt so helpless, what could we do?
Remembering all the things we'd been through
In fair map meetings they all stop and stare
I can't hide the tears, but I don't care
We can't wait to welcome back (the leader of the pack)*

Thanks again Val for your amazingly hard work!

LWVIL Convention Report

– by Cate Whitcomb

LWVIL Convention 2011, held at the Holiday Inn Skokie, June 9-11, was attended by 95 delegates and three alternates from 28 local Leagues and three Inter-League Organizations as well as guests. To start the formal activities on Friday, Skokie Mayor George Van Dusen welcomed the League to his community.

LWVIL's Community Impact Award was presented to the Elmhurst League for its investigation into Elmhurst School District issues. Elmhurst LWV's efforts lead to a better informed public and increased civility and respect between the community and its school board and administration. Also recognized for their achievements were the Cook County LWV, the Highland Park LWV, and the Lake Forest/Lake Bluff Area LWV.

Saturday morning, prior to the business portion of the weekend, began with a speech by Elisabeth MacNamara, president of LWVUS. She encouraged all Leagues to register new voters, educate all voters, use the vote and hold our elected officials accountable. She further urged members to continue being nonpartisan by providing information that is unbiased and impartial. Leaguers must work to protect current voter registration and voting policies.



L-R: Back: Paula Ekstrom, Mary Kubasak, Cate Whitcomb, Gigi Moore, Cheryl Wollin, Elaine Adler Front: Hollis Burgess, Nancy Clark, Laura Kratz, Jan Dörner, Missey Wilhelm, Joni Painter, Anne Logue

During the plenary portion of the convention on Saturday & Sunday, delegates discussed and approved the 2011-2012 and 2012-2013 budgets. The Budget Committee did not recommend an increase in either year's PMP but encouraged LWVIL to make every effort to keep expenses in check and seek additional revenues from fundraising and alternative funding sources.

The 2011-2013 board of officers and directors was elected: **Jan Dörner**, President; **Missey Wilhelm**, VP Voter Services; **Joni Painter**,

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LWV League Leaders 2011-2012

New officers & directors were elected by acclamation at the Annual Meeting on May 19.

Please see page 2 for complete list and page 5 for more about the meeting.

Congratulations to all and thank you for serving our League!

Back row L-R: **Gloria Callaci**, Member At Large;
Kate Julian, Voter Service – Candidate Forums;
Karen Hunt, Development Chair;
Melissa Leasia, VP Communication;
Elizabeth (Betty) Hayford, Treasurer
Front row L-R: **Eleanora DiLiscia**, Secretary;
Susan Black, President;
Catherine (Cate) Whitcomb, VP, Membership



LWVE Calendar At A Glance

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

New events to be listed on web site soon!

Monday, August 1 ~ 11:30 am to 1:00 pm

Lunch & Learn: LWV of Cook County

"It's a New Day in Cook County:

What's Been Accomplished and What's Coming"

Speaker: Kurt Summers, Chief of Staff to Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle

North Café, De Paul University Center, 11th Floor
1 East Jackson (corner of State St & Jackson) Chicago.
Cost \$30 (includes buffet salad luncheon)
RSVP: Priscilla Mims 312-861-0166 (by July 25)

Tuesday, August 9 ~ 12 noon-1:30 pm

Check in begins at 11:30 am

**2011 LWVE Legislative Luncheon with
U.S. Representative Jan Schakowsky
Unitarian Church of Evanston**

1330 Ridge Avenue, Evanston
Cost \$20 (includes boxed lunch from Food for Thought)
RSVP no later than August 4:
lwevanston@att.net or 847-866-7844
See page 1 for more details.

LWVIL Convention Report

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VP Membership; **Laura Kratz**, VP Issues; **Hollis Burgess**, VP Communications; **Annie Logue**, Secretary; **Nancy Clark**, Treasurer; as well as Board members, **Cate Whitcomb**, **Mary Kubasak**, **Gigi Moore**, **Paula Ekstrom**, **Cheryl Wollin** and **Elaine Adler**.

The currently existing positions held by LWVIL were re-adopted. In addition, the recommendation to adopt a Study of the Illinois Pension System was adopted. The update on Recall and Term Limits was dropped as no one had volunteered to work on that issue. The non-recommended item proposed by the Wheaton League under State Fiscal Policy, to study the expenditures side of

the Illinois budget, was brought to the floor and discussed, but did not get sufficient votes to be adopted.

The following items were adopted or readopted as action foci:

- Fiscal Policy and Tax Reform
- Campaign Finance and Ethics Reform
- Redistricting Reform
- Immigration
- Climate Change
- Large-Scale Livestock Facilities

Editor's Note: **Congratulations** to Evanston League members **Cate Whitcomb** and **Cheryl Wollin**, who were elected to the LWVIL board. Thank you for agreeing to serve!

LWVE Women of Achievement Awards



L-R: Kathy Tate-Bradish, Helen Gagel, Cate Whitcomb, Eleanor Revelle

– by Helen Gagel

At the LWVE Annual Meeting on May 19, President Susan Black presented **“Women of Achievement”** awards to four members. Their personal stories and League experiences vary widely, but have one common theme: the League as a catalyst, influence, and learning laboratory for their personal and professional growth. After the meeting, several members suggested that these stories be encapsulated and shared as a marketing tool for the League—so here they are!

Kathy Tate-Bradish was a League volunteer as a college student in Champaign-Urbana, and joined the Evanston League in 1988. In addition to a term as Evanston LWV president, Kathy has served as membership chair, and has been involved in voter education, including serving as a moderator at candidate forums. Since 2004, she has been traveling regularly to rural Kenya as a sex education teacher and trainer. *“The foundation of my belief in the League of Women Voters, and in the curriculum I’ve developed to train Kenyan farmers to teach sex education, are one and the same. In the League we do take positions on issues. But we do it after extensive study of the facts. In teaching about HIV and sex, it is important to use facts rather than emotion, religion, or subjective judgment to educate.”*

Kathy says her League experience gave her **“opportunities to see, learn from, and practice techniques for helping all voices to be heard,”** lessons that she is now applying to her work in Kenya. *“The organization that I work with, Vumilia CBO, advocates in the community for women’s and*

girls’ rights. In my small way – encouraging questions, institutionalizing a way to gather and answer anonymous questions, training men and women to teach using positive reinforcement rather than ridicule – I try to model what it looks like to be a person who respects others’ opinions, who corrects gently and encourages enthusiastically, who values every voice.”

What the League means to me: *I know that part of what attracted me to the League in the first place is our fact-based objectivity in pursuit of giving everyone a voice. I’ve learned and grown through my League activities and the opportunities it has afforded me, and try to carry those values into my teaching and training in Kenya. My League friends and my teaching colleagues and audiences in Kenya share two important attributes. We are all life-long learners who believe in giving back to our communities. We do that in large ways and small, and contribute to our shared humanity. **It’s a ride I’m glad to be on with so many inspirational people.***

Helen Gagel joined the League in 1974, and within weeks of becoming a member, was asked to fill a vacant slot on the board as PR chair. **“As a stay-at-home mom, the League was my vehicle for keeping my professional skills intact, and for getting involved in truly meaningful work in my community.”** Helen’s League jobs included editing the 1976 edition of This Is Evanston, and chairing or serving

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Women of Achievement Awards

continued from p 5

on study committees focused on housing, school finance, council-manager government, and a review of boards and commissions. She is now doing her second stint as Intercom editor, and is glad that computers and digital publishing have replaced typewriters and mimeograph machines.

Helen's career has been in communications and public affairs for nonprofit organizations. She is now executive director of North Shore Village, an organization for older adults who wish to "age in place" in their own homes. NSV is part of a nationwide movement of people who want to be self-determinant and in charge of their aging process. The goal of this new social enterprise is to create a caring community that has a positive impact on quality of life for older adults, thus easing the strain on the existing aging services network as 78 million baby boomers begin turning 65.

What the League means to me: *The League gave me role models and mentors, and was the beginning of my education in leadership, community relations, nonprofit management and board development. My League experience was my path back into the workforce. **This is a powerful network! The core of my League experience was learning how to build consensus leading to action and change.** That is at the heart of what we all derive as members of the League of Women Voters.*

Cate Whitcomb joined the Evanston League in the mid-1990s. She cites her League experience as central to her "becoming American" after spending her childhood and adolescence in India, where her first political experience was to organize a mock election during 1960 presidential campaign. As a League leader, voter registration is one of Cate's primary interests. As the Assistant to the Vice President for Student Affairs at Northwestern, she worked with students interested in civic engagement, including voter registration drives. *"Students gained not only practical knowledge but a sense of agency and ownership in the political process. I took students with me to League events and workshops. **One of those students is now employed in the West Wing of the Obama White House. Others are pursuing degrees in policy studies or have run for political office. One of them is still a member of the Evanston League.**"*

The 2008 Presidential election found Cate back in India, directing a study abroad program, where she made sure her students applied for absentee ballots.

What the League means to me: *As my good friend in the League Kathy Tate-Bradish points out, the primary attributes of the League are, in these contentious times, three: the League is fact-based and non-partisan; its members are seekers of objective truths about societal issues; and everyone is given a voice in consensus building. **My League membership is perhaps my best choice on my path to "becoming American."** I have also found along the way that I will never be completely American – India is forever where I am from, a part of my soul and my DNA – but that I am comfortable with my ambiguous "belonging" to this still bewildering, sometimes frustrating place which has gradually become my country, the U.S.A.*

Eleanor Revelle joined the Evanston League in 1976, and has been a League leader at the local, state and national level. She is a former board member and president of the Evanston LWV and the Illinois LWV, and served on the national League board as chair of the advocacy committee. Eleanor has held leadership roles in numerous community endeavors, most notably the Evanston Community Foundation. **In recent years climate action has become her primary focus – "an all-absorbing new career for me."** As chair of the national League's Climate Change Task Force, she developed an online Climate Action Toolkit. She also writes about climate-related topics and sustainability for the Evanston Roundtable, and is a founding board member of Citizens' Greener Evanston. Eleanor doesn't just write and talk about climate change. She acts. When she and her husband, Bill Revelle, were planning to build a new house, *"we quickly set ourselves the goal of making our house as carbon-neutral as possible. We also wanted to demonstrate the potential of renewable energy in the upper Midwest. The result: we have a highly energy efficient house and make 80 percent of our electricity."* Eleanor and Bill give frequent tours. *"The house gives us an excuse to proselytize to anyone who will listen."* They also host a website: Revelle.net/lakeside — to help others who are interested in having a more energy-efficient home.

What the League means to me: *Although I didn't realize it at the time, my 35-plus years of League involvement were terrific preparation for becoming an effective advocate for action on climate change. These opportunities provided invaluable experience in addressing complex issues of public policy, planning action campaigns, and managing nonprofit organizations.*

LWV Web Update

National LWV E-mail Lists Keep Members & Leaders Up to Date

If you haven't updated your profile on the LWVUS website recently, take a few minutes to do so. There are online issues-related discussion lists, as well as LWV role-related lists. Any active League member may subscribe to any and all lists, including the League Leaders list. If you are not registered on the site, follow these steps to log on and update your profile:

1. Go to <https://member.lwv.org/Login.asp>
2. Scroll down to the green box where you'll see Register (for new users) and enter your first name, last name & email
3. Create your personal password (8 characters or more.)

Then you're ready to visit the For Members or Update Profile page. If you wish to subscribe to the Leaders' Update which is published weekly, please click on League Sponsored Email Lists which is on left side of your profile page. You may find other topics of interest.

Thanks to Janet Kittlaus for reminding us that the LWVUS site has a wealth of information and resources for League members and the public. *Editor's note: The "For Members" tab on the site is being "updated and streamlined" according to a message posted on the site. Please visit the site to provide your feedback.*



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.



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Volunteer Opportunities

Your City Needs You! Many Ways to Serve.



League members are no strangers to civic engagement — it's what we do. But beyond our involvement in the League, we can support the City through volunteer opportunities now conveniently posted on the City's website. From being a greeter at the Civic Center, to helping with the Comprehensive Plan Review, to lending a hand at the library, there are myriad opportunities to be of service.

To learn more, visit the City of Evanston website:
cityofevanston.org/resident/volunteer or call: 847-448-8266

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Observers Summary

– by Jan Otwell

League observers are our “eyes and ears” at the City Council and its standing committees, which set policy and direction for the City. If you’d like to learn the nitty-gritty of local government, being an observer is a great way to start. Call Jessica Feldman, Observer Chair, at 847-864-2199 for more information. Here is summary of what happened since the last Intercom:

If it is summer, can winter be far behind? Despite the fact that this is summer, the City Council spent considerable time at a recent meeting talking about the storage of salt for the protection of city streets during winter snow storms. Suzette Robinson, Director of Public Works, renewed a discussion which had begun in 2008 about an additional salt storage facility. Staff proposed several sites and designs for such a structure. Council members, however, were decidedly not pleased with the proposed sites, and suggested that staff look for alternative sites both inside and outside of Evanston, and come back in six months for further discussion.

Budget Issues and Community Priorities: City Manager Bobkiewicz told a May meeting of the Council that there is an anticipated shortfall in the General Fund for 2012 of \$1.4 million and for 2013 of \$3.2 million. Concern with needed improvements in infrastructure has led the staff to recommend a \$2 million transfer from the Operating Fund to fund some of the needs. Bobkiewicz says the staff will use priority-based budgeting, which will include a comprehensive review of programs and services that will then be compared with the Strategic Plan. A separate citizen-input plan this spring has identified 175 specific ideas related to the budget. The schedule for the summer and fall is the following: The August 8 Council meeting will consider the budget; during the remainder of August and September budget discussions will go out to the public; the 2012 budget will be presented to Council in October; we will continue with budget hearings until the final budget is passed before Thanksgiving.

Town (Township) Meeting on Budget: Aldermen, who also serve as Township Trustees, have become increasingly concerned with the Town Fund which funds all expenses of the township except General Assistance. The Town Fund includes money for the Assessor’s Office, and trustees felt some salary raises to be excessive. Trustee Grover raised what she felt was the larger issue: is the township the most effective and efficient form of government to deliver services? Since the Trustees felt uncomfortable with the budget, the City Attorney suggested that they could approve only a 90-day extension, which is what they did. The Township will now work with City staff to see if there are some items that could be taken over by the City, before they take final action on the budget.

The Bag Tax: At an Administration and Public Works Committee meeting, Ald. Burrus requested that the proposed ordinance to levy a 5 cent tax on disposable shopping bags in Evanston be brought back before the City Council. The Council has discussed this ordinance, and citizens have brought forth their concerns about the effect on business in the community. The ordinance was kept in committee for staff to do further work on it. At a later

Council meeting, Ald. Rainey asked for an update and Ald. Burrus told her the issue was sent back to the Environmental Board which is expected to report back in October. Stay tuned.

Council Will Meet 3 Times Monthly: The Rules Committee recommended that the City Code and the Council Rules be changed directing the Council to meet three times a month instead of semi-monthly or twice a month. This would enable the Council to hear special presentations at one meeting, thereby freeing up time at the regular bi-monthly meetings.

Special Presentations: The first of these was in June, and five presentations were given:

Climate Action Plan: Catherine Hurley, the City’s Sustainability Coordinator, gave some of the highlights: energy consumption across the city is down 2%, and recycling is up 12%.

Wind Farm Report: Co-chairs William Seigfriedt and Nicolai Schousboe reported that, while some committee members were very positive, others had concerns about the cost. During Citizen Comment which preceded this report, twelve citizens commented and nine had concerns about proceeding. While the Council approved the report, they sent it back to be considered again at the July 11 Council meeting.

311 Call Center: First Quarter Report: There were 31,000 calls during the first quarter of the 311 Call Center (March through May) according to Joe McRae from the City Manager’s office. He expects 124,000 the first year. This line is for non-emergency calls and is staffed 24/7. Most calls went to Public Works—complaints about non-working parking meters and failure to pick up trash.

Mass Notification Plan: Under this plan, citizens are notified of an emergency—for instance, the system was used three times during the snow emergency. At the time of the shooting at McDonald’s, the system alerted citizens living nearby. There is now an option for citizens to opt out if they do not wish to receive the alerts.

City Council Goals Update: In the interest of time, the City Manager went rapidly through the updates on the 12 goals in the Strategic Action Plan.

Short Takes: The President & Vice President of Com Ed met with Mayor Tisdahl to discuss complaints about the utility’s slow response during the power outage suffered by Evanston residents after the severe thunderstorms of early July. **Mayor Tisdahl** accepted the First Place Award for Evanston’s Climate Action Plan at the U.S. Conference of Mayors and the Mayor congratulated the entire city of Evanston. **Fire Chief Klaiber** announced a training program for CPR funded by North Shore University Health Systems. **Supporters of the Chandler-Newberger Recreation Center** organized following a statement that it might be put to other uses as a result of budget problems. **The Levy Center** is launching a File for Life program through which individuals can list basic information needed for paramedics or other responders if the patient is unable to give that information.



League of Women Voters® of Evanston

2100 Ridge Avenue in Evanston, IL 60201

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