



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF EVANSTON  
**THE INTERCOM**

SEPTEMBER 2011

**National League Seeks Consensus On  
 Federal Role in Public Education**

– by Susan Black

As the youth of Evanston returned to school in late August, important work had already been in progress for a year to launch a national League study of the future of elementary and secondary education in the United States.



The scope of the Education Study encompasses two key aspects of the federal government’s role in pre-K through grade 12 public education:

- the history, funding and equity issues which are addressed under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act
- the common core standards/assessments which are required for many federal grant programs.

The culminating position will address only those issues delineated in the scope. This study was adopted by the membership at the LWWUS convention in 2010. Each local League in the country is expected to hold membership discussion and consensus meetings and submit the consensus results by November 30, 2011. The timing is critical since it is intended to be the education policy the LWWUS advocates for as the political parties convene in their national conventions during summer 2012. ***(For newer members: the League defines consensus as the collective opinion of a substantial number of League members, representative of the membership as a whole, after objective study of an issue.)***

Much of the hard work on this study has been done by the very dedicated LWWUS Education Study Steering Committee, with representation by League members from across the country who are passionate about the challenges facing elementary and secondary education in the 21st century. Pat Aaron, Evanston League member and former public school administrator, wrote the Early Childhood report for the national study.

With a very short time period to accomplish our goals, we are asking as many Evanston League members as possible

to participate in the activities scheduled this fall. The first event will be held on Monday, September 26 from 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm at the New Trier Northfield Campus with experts speaking on the education study topics. Speakers will include Ralph Martire, Executive Director of the Center for Tax and Budget Funding and Equity and

Madelyn James, Director of the “Great at Eight” initiative at Voices for Illinois Children, speaking about funding and equity for early childhood education. A third speaker will address Common Core Standards and Assessments on Thursday, October 6 at 1:00 pm in Glencoe. (Please see the Calendar of Events on page 7).

To prepare members for participating in our Evanston consensus meeting and to provide resources that will begin to build a foundation of information on the LWWUS education study, these documents, prepared by LWWUS steering committee are can be downloaded at [www.lww.org](http://www.lww.org) by clicking on the following links: For Members/Projects and Programs/The Education Study: The Role of the Federal Government in Public Education/Voter Ready Articles:

The History of the Federal Government in Public Education:  
 Where Have We Been and How Did We Get Here

The Role of the Federal Government in Public Education: Legislation and Funding for The Education of Children with Special Needs

The Role of the Federal Government in Public Education: Equity and Funding

The Role of the Federal Government in Public Education: Where We Are Now and the Impact Upon Early Childhood Education

Common Core Standards

Consensus Questions

# President's Letter

What has been happening in the news since our last issue of *The Intercom* has been rather discouraging and has created even more frustration with how things are being handled in Washington by Congress. We have witnessed our nation teetering on the brink of financial collapse that was averted at the 11th hour. This only left U.S. citizens days before they watched the financial markets go into wild gyrations. Our relief from this melee was hearing the report of U.S. Representative Jan Schakowsky at our 2011 Legislative Lunch on Tuesday, August 9 at the Unitarian Church of Evanston. In her report, she shared her experiences as a representative of the 9th Congressional District. One could sense her dedication to her work--listening to the concerns of her constituents as they shared the anguish and pain they felt about the disappearing American Dream, balanced against one of her many accomplishments of writing new legislation about creating jobs. In these times, we can all feel extremely grateful that she is indeed fighting on our behalf. It became clear to many in the audience that Jan cannot be the only voice in Washington and we all need to become more vocal with our legislative leaders. One suggestion made, after hearing that Speaker of the House John Boehner insisted on shifting back to the use of Styrofoam cups, plates and silverware in the House cafeteria, was that we all start sending Styrofoam products to Ohio to send an even stronger message about how reversing a positive trend can have dangerous consequences.

With all of the tumult at the national level, I have incredible optimism about what's coming up at the local level as we move into the rich harvest of the autumn season. For those of you who may not be aware, there has been much work being accomplished by a dedicated group of League members at the national level, including Evanston League member Pat Aaron, creating the LWVUS national study on education policy. Evanston League members will have the opportunity to attend briefing sessions created in conjunction with other Leagues on the North Shore to hear experts speak on equity and funding in education as well as the merits of developing core curriculum standards.

I would also like to honor the contributions of Betty Hayford over the past year as the outgoing Vice President of Local Programs who has been tireless in her efforts to work closely with the Local Government Committee and City of Evanston officials to foster stronger communication about the financial challenges facing the city. Without the dedication and perseverance of Betty on several initiatives, we would not be able to move forward and strengthen our presence in the community.

Thanks to Cate Whitcomb and her crew of volunteers for sharing the story of League with shoppers at the Evanston Farmers Market Nonprofit Day on Saturday, September 10.

Before we can blink twice the March primary elections will be here—as I've found in the past year as President, time flies when you're having fun.

See you soon,  
*Susan*



## League of Women Voters of Evanston

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847-866-7844

Office E-Mail: lwvevanston@att.net  
Web Site: www.lwve.org

### 2011-2012 Elected Officers

<b>President</b>	Susan Black
<b>VP Local Programs</b>	Elizabeth Kinney
<b>VP Membership</b>	Catherine Whitcomb
<b>VP Communication</b>	Melissa Leasia
<b>Secretary</b>	Eleanora DiLiscia
<b>Treasurer</b>	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**  
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### 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

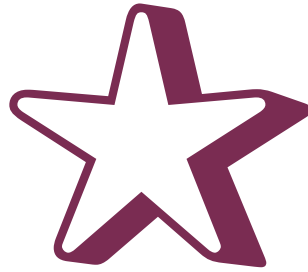
September 2011

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

# Cook County Chief of Staff “STARs” at Lunch & Learn

by Priscilla Mims

Kurt Summers, Chief of Staff to Cook County President Toni Preckwinkle, was the featured speaker at the summer Lunch & Learn sponsored by the League of Women Voters of Cook County. A sell-out group heard about some of the challenges that faced the new administration when President Preckwinkle took office last December, as well as about the new quarterly management report recently released by the County called “STAR” (Set Targets \* Achieve Results).



## Challenges

President Preckwinkle assumed the presidency of a county that had no approved budget, even though we were already 5 days into the new fiscal year. For the first 50 days, Mr. Summers said, “it was all about the budget” and trying to close a \$1/2 billion hole in a \$3.5 billion county budget. This was done in the closing hours of the mandated deadline at the end of February. And, while budget review and negotiations were going on, at the President’s urging, the Board passed ordinances reducing the County’s share of the sales tax by ¼ cent by January 2012 and again in 2013, effectively rolling back the increase that had been passed under the prior administration. This sales tax reduction, which fulfilled a campaign promise, will, of course, produce more budget challenges for the future.



*“This is the first opportunity for all of the separate agencies of Cook County to stand together and report system-wide data. This allows us to have frank conversations about the cost and quality of services we provide residents.” – Toni Preckwinkle, Cook County Board President*

But the greatest challenge, said Mr. Summers, is the structure of the Executive Branch of Cook County government. While the United States government has one chief executive, in Cook County government we have 12 separately elected executives, including the Sheriff, State’s Attorney, Chief Judge, Assessor, Clerk, and Recorder of Deeds, as well as the President. President Preckwinkle, accordingly, cannot simply issue an edict and expect all the other elected officials in the Executive Branch to simply fall in line. Often much time must be spent in negotiation and persuasion.

## Goal to Improve Transparency & Accountability

Mr. Summers told us that one of the chief goals of President Preckwinkle is to have true transparency and accountability in county government. In addition to issuing a Transition Report, the administration published a “100-day report card” and plans to issue a one-year report card this December,

looking at how many of the goals in the Transition Report have been accomplished. For the first time, a preliminary budget for 2012 has been posted on the County’s web site, and a public hearing to elicit views on budget priorities was held in August. The President’s proposed budget for 2012 will follow after this public input and is expected to be submitted to the Cook County Board before the end of October. (The new fiscal year begins December 1.)

The centerpiece of the new administration’s efforts to improve Cook County government across all areas is the STAR report that will be issued quarterly. The Cook County Board passed an ordinance requiring all county agencies to set goals, establish measurements in order to evaluate how well the goals are being met, and to then provide data on those measurements. STAR is to be used to create

efficiencies, improve services, ask for feedback, and lower the cost of government. In addition to each department participating separately, for the first time, the County has set goals that all agencies are expected to work towards in the following areas that cut

across the separately elected county executives’ domains: Finance and Administration, Healthcare, Public Safety, Property & Taxation, and Economic Development.

You can see the STAR Report and comment on the goals, measurements, and results by going to the Cook County web site: [www.cookcountyil.gov](http://www.cookcountyil.gov). Check it out, along with the Preliminary Budget and the Transition Report and 100-Day Report Card.

**The Cook County League is already at work on the next Lunch & Learn event scheduled for Tuesday, October 25. Details to follow shortly.**

Thomas E Ryan Jr, Chairman; Coalition of Unionized Public Employees says about Toni Preckwinkle:

*“I am very pleased with the openness of the President’s Office and her forward thinking about the future of Cook County. The fact that she is able to bring both management and labor together to work together to find efficiencies in operations is crucial to the performance of the County of Cook.”*

# “Leading Us Blindfolded Over A Cliff”

– by Elizabeth Hayford

More than 80 members of the LWVE, along with several from Glenview, gathered to hear U.S. Representative Jan Schakowsky (D-9th) at the annual Legislative Lunch on August 9. On a glorious clear and sunny day, Ms. Schakowsky described the prolonged stalemate over the debt ceiling and deficit reduction as a "man-made catastrophe" created by some members of Congress willing to destroy the American economy in order to pursue an ideological vision. She recalled a recent political cartoon showing a blindfolded child dragging the nation over a cliff to set a theme for her remarks.

In her opening remarks, Ms. Schakowsky described the month-long battle in Congress over debt reduction as a "destructive struggle over the wrong issue." She explained her vote against the final bill as a protest against a plan based on cuts and reductions in important safety-net programs that help the neediest, including the WIC (Women, Infants and Children) program. She maintained that any deficit reduction plan should be balanced with increases in revenues, including higher tax rates for very wealthy individuals and elimination of loopholes in corporate taxes.

She stated that the United States is "not broke" and drastic cuts are not justified. Entitlement programs are not the problem—Social Security can remain strong with minor revisions and Medicare should be maintained through addressing the high costs of health care overall, not just Medicare costs.

Ms. Schakowsky also pointed out that the "debt crisis" is the wrong issue for Congress to debate. Instead, the real problems in the American economy stem from the crisis in jobs, the crisis reflected in the disappearing middle class, and the crisis caused by the growing disparity in incomes. She illustrated this problem with a chart showing how the income of wealthiest Americans has grown disproportionately since 1975 compared to modest gains by middle and working class Americans. Ms. Schakowsky has introduced two bills to address these concerns, one to create jobs to put two million people to work over two years doing important infrastructure projects like repairing schools, maintaining parks or expanding clean energy, and one to expand fairness in taxation by establishing new higher tax brackets for high income Americans. *Editor's note: as this Intercom goes into production, President Obama has*



L-R: Karen Young, Jan Schakowsky, Susan Black

proposed the American Jobs Act, which includes provisions similar to those in Ms. Schakowsky's bills).

Summarizing her concerns on the economy, Ms. Schakowsky asserted we need to have a balanced approach, including modifications in entitlement programs, raising some taxes, and supporting job creation and economic growth. We need to restore a national consensus that our economy and our society are national concerns and we need to

work together towards our common well being.

Following her prepared remarks, she responded to wide-ranging questions from the audience on the military budget, foreign policy priorities, renewable energy, education policy, and the effectiveness of Democratic Party leadership. She agreed on the need for party leaders to be more forceful in explaining the rationale for a balanced approach to the budget along with the importance of investing in jobs and vital programs.

Many came to the meeting discouraged with the state of the political discourse, and Ms. Schakowsky succeeded in projecting confidence that national issues can be effectively addressed. The large turnout and engaged discussion demonstrated the value of regular meetings with our elected representatives.

## In the News

**Citing a Census Bureau report**, the *New York Times* (Sept. 13) reported that "another 2.6 million people slipped into poverty in the United States last year, and the number of Americans living below the official poverty line, 46.2 million people, was the highest number in the 52 years the bureau has been publishing figures on it."

### Income and Poverty Rate at 1990s Levels

The Times quoted Harvard economist Lawrence Katz who said this is "the first time since the Great Depression that median household income, adjusted for inflation, had not risen over such a long period."

"This is truly a lost decade," Mr. Katz said. "We think of America as a place where every generation is doing better, but we're looking at a period when the median family is in worse shape than it was in the late 1990s."

## Lake Michigan League Annual Meeting

League members are invited to the Annual Meeting of the Lake Michigan League of Women Voters on October 21 & 22, 2011 at the Hilton Oak Lawn in Oak Lawn, Illinois.

The keynote speaker will be Todd Main, Deputy Director of the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, who will talk about Invasive Species, including the latest on the Asian Carp, as well as the Millennium Reserve System. Other speakers include Debra Shore, Commissioner of the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago, who will talk about storm water and wastewater discharges known as combined sewer overflows, and Judy Beck, Lake Michigan Manager for the US EPA, who will report on the State of Lake Michigan.

Educational field trips are planned to the Lake Calumet area where participants will see first hand the interplay of remaining wilderness areas with industry and landfills, and a free walk through Beaubien Woods, led by Jean Sellar, a steward from Friends of the Forest Preserves. LMLWV members have advocated for federal Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) funding, which is the source of funds for projects to restore wetlands and remove invasive species in Beaubien Woods.

Please contact Susan Black at [seblack451@gmail.com](mailto:seblack451@gmail.com) if you would like to attend. We would like to have at least one member represent our League at this important meeting.

## Membership Report Update On LWVE Membership Directory

The 2011 LWVE membership directory was mailed out in July. Our thanks to LWVE members Diane Korling, Janet Kittlaus, and Sonia Evenstad for their hard work on preparing and proofreading the directory.

Please take a moment to check your listing in the directory and please email Diane Korling at [dkorling@earthlink.net](mailto:dkorling@earthlink.net) if there are corrections to be made to your listing. Thanks!

Here's a hearty welcome to three new members of the Evanston League of Women Voters:

**Matt Keenan   Myrna Orenstein   Harlan Shropshire**

## Evanston Farmers Market



L-R Cate Whitcomb, Susan Black and Barbara Handler



## YWCA Breakfasts

The Evanston YWCA is hosting a series of breakfasts to discuss the question: "What will make Evanston a community in which women and girls thrive?" The goal is to produce a report on the Status of Women and Girls in Evanston, to be rolled out on International Women's Day, March 8, 2012.

If you have any ideas about this topic, please be in touch with Kim Hoopingarner at [hoop4girls@att.net](mailto:hoop4girls@att.net).

## LWVE Calendar At A Glance

**Monday, September 26 – 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm**  
North Shore League's Information Session on LWVUS  
Education Study (see article on page 1)  
New Trier Northfield Campus 7 Happ Road, Northfield

**Thursday, October 6 – 1:00 pm**  
Common Core Standards and Assessments  
Informal Discussion and Q & A with Dr. John Wick,  
Professor Emeritus, Northwestern University  
Glencoe Park District Takiff Center Community Room 1  
999 Green Bay Road, Glencoe, IL

**Thursday, October 6 – 7:00 pm**  
**LWVE Board of Directors Meeting**  
James L. King Home 1555 Oak Ave, Evanston

**Thursday, October 13 – 12 Noon to 1:30 pm**  
LWVE Luncheon Presentation on Education Issues in  
Evanston: *An Administrator's Perspective*  
Gio's 1631 Chicago Avenue, Evanston  
Cost: \$20.00. RSVP to LWVE Office by Monday,  
October 10: 847-866-7844

*continued on page 7*



### LWVIL Night of Comedy!

Join the  
League of Women Voters of Illinois  
for a special presentation of

## Wait Wait... Don't Tell Me!

**Thursday, October 13**  
**6:00 pm**

- WHO:** League of Women Voters and their guests  
**WHAT:** Performance of Wait Wait Don't Tell Me  
**WHERE:** Chase Bank Auditorium 10 South Dearborn in Chicago  
**WHY:** To have a great time and raise money for the League!  
**PRICE:** \$65.00 includes ticket plus reception BEFORE the show

#### REGISTER TODAY!

To pay by phone call Mo Ormiston, Member Services Coordinator at 312-939-5935, ext. 37.  
Mail in the registration form LWVIL, 332 S. Michigan Ave, Chicago, 60604, Suite 525  
or pay by credit card online at the League of Women Voters web site [www.lwv.org](http://www.lwv.org).

**Registrations due by September 27, 2011. LIMITED TICKETS! BOOK NOW!**

If you are unfamiliar with the show, check out the web cast of past shows or listen to WBEZ Saturdays at 10:00 am. The cost of attendance in excess of \$30 (fair market value of the event) is tax deductible subject to applicable limitations on charitable contributions

# LWVE Calendar At A Glance

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**Thursday, October 13 - LWVIL Fund Raiser**  
**"Wait, Wait Don't Tell Me" Live Show**  
**Chase Bank Auditorium in Chicago**  
 Tickets \$65.00. Details page 6.

**Tuesday, October 18 – 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm**  
**Common Core Standards and Assessment** (7 to 8 pm)  
**Consensus Meetings by Individual Leagues** (8 to 9 pm)  
**New Trier West Northfield Board Room**  
 Presenters: Glenview and Winnetka/Northfield/Kenilworth Leagues

**Wednesday, October 19 – 1:00 to 3:00 pm**  
**Funding and Equity** (1 pm to 2 pm)  
**Consensus Meetings by Individual Leagues** (2 to 3 pm)  
**New Trier West Northfield Board Room**  
 Presenters: Evanston and Glencoe Leagues

All programs are free unless otherwise noted.  
 For more information call 847-866-7844  
 or visit **Calendar Updates** at: [www.lwve.org](http://www.lwve.org)



## 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](http://cityofevanston.org/resident/volunteer) or call: 847-448-8266

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# Observers Summary: City Council To Take Up FY 2012 Budget

League observers are our “eyes and ears” at the City Council and other local government bodies. If you’d like to learn the nitty-gritty of local government, being an observer is a great way to start. **We need more observers!** We’d like to enlist observers for District 65 and 202 Boards. If you can help with this crucial League activity, please call Observer Chair Jessica Feldman at 847-864-2199.

**Thanks to Jan Otwell for this summary of recent City Council meetings:**

**Budget Preparation:** Underlying the work of the City Council over the summer has been the preparation of a balanced budget for the City. The projected gap in operating expenses for 2012 is estimated at \$2.1 million, with the possible transfer of another \$2 million from the operating fund to the capital improvements budget. City staff is evaluating 96 city services to see where cuts are possible. A citizen group, Engage Evanston, made 175 suggestions for ways to cut the budget. After committee work to evaluate and pare these down, staff will pursue some and give others further consideration. The 2012 budget will be presented to the full Council in October.

**The Smell of Summer:** Citizens on the west side dominated the Citizen Comment period for two Council meetings with their complaints about the smell emanating from Veolia Environmental Services’ solid waste transfer station. The City Council authorized the Mayor to convey Evanston’s objections to the Environmental Protection Agency about Veolia’s request to expand their operation. The Council approved an ordinance with a new version of the city’s waste station transfer fee, after citizen complaints in person and on the 311 line. The city wants to prepare itself in case of a lawsuit initiated by Veolia.

**Privatization:** Another issue which brought citizens out in force for Citizen Comment was the proposal in the budget to privatize certain functions of city government. City workers were especially vocal, criticizing not only

the privatizing of certain specific functions but also protesting more largely the issue of public services being delivered by the private sector.

**Special Order of Business on Alternative Property Uses:**

The City Manager and staff had, in preparing for the budget, done a survey of buildings owned by the City which needed, in their opinion, more repair work than the City could afford. The three primarily singled out were Chandler-Newberger Recreation Center, the Evanston Art Center on the lakefront, and the Noyes Cultural Arts Center. The Mayor expressed support for Chandler, so the fractious discussion centered on what to do about the two art centers. The Council made a clear decision to keep Chandler-Newberger but there was no decision on the two art centers.

**Music Hall On Davis Street:** The sound of music may in the future be emanating from the newly-planned music hall, to be called Grace Music Theater, on the site of the Tom Thumb store on Davis St. east of Oak. The architects proposed a plan which was approved by the Plan Commission in July. The City Council quickly approved the plan at a meeting following in early August. They made some changes: an increase of three feet in height and the

elimination of a 10-foot setback from the alley.

**Short Takes: CommUNITY Picnic** was held August 28. **Paint the Town Purple** was planned for Northwestern’s first home game in September. **Concern was expressed for the length of Com Ed outages** following the storms and downed trees. **Mary Johns, director of the Evanston Public Library**, who has taken a position in Sioux City, SD, was honored for her service. **Aldermen expressed appreciation to Northwestern** for the gift of an ambulance. **Office Depot will have an opportunity to appeal** the decision of the Sign Review and Appeals Board which ruled their sign was too high. **Mayor Tisdahl honored Evanstonian Sergeant Kevin Ramon Dunn** for his three tours of duty in Iraq and one in Afghanistan.



## Upcoming Budget Sessions

**City Council Special Meeting**

Saturday, October 15  
9:00 am – 1:00 pm

**City Council Special Meeting**

Saturday, October 29  
9:00 am – 1:00 pm

**City Council Special Meeting**

FY2012 Budget  
Wednesday, November 16  
7:00 pm

All sessions will be held in the City Council chambers at the Lorraine H. Morton Civic Center, 2100 Ridge in Evanston.



# League of Women Voters® of Evanston

2100 Ridge Avenue in Evanston, IL 60201

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# Community Banking At Its Best



Just like members of a family, your bankers should be supportive and dependable—building lifetime relationships and caring about the well-being of the community.

First Bank & Trust is locally owned and managed by people who make their homes in the community. We know the area and how special it is.

Our promise to you is to bring back community banking to your neighborhood. So, come home—to First Bank & Trust.

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### We put community first.™



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