



BULLETIN

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF WILMETTE

Contact us: LWV-Wilmette, P. O. Box 432, Wilmette, IL 60091

847-604-1207

lwwilmette.org

Vol. 60, No. 9

October 2009

DEMOCRACY IS NOT A SPECTATOR SPORT

COMING EVENTS

League of Women Voters of Wilmette

**Book Discussion of
Outliers: The Story of Success
by Malcolm Gladwell**

Thursday, October 15

7:00 pm

Wilmette Public Library
Conference Room
1242 Wilmette Avenue

Discussion Leader: Georgia Gebhardt

Outliers: The Story of Success explains why some people succeed far more than others. The author argues that if we want to understand how some people thrive, we should spend more time looking around them---at such things as their family, their birthplace, or even their birth date.

LWV Members Invited to Informational Meeting on Current Reproductive Health Legislation

The Illinois General Assembly has begun work on a comprehensive Reproductive Health & Access Act. In order to inform ourselves of the goals and content of this legislation, the Wilmette LWV will sponsor a forum on Thursday, October 29, at 7:00 PM in the conference room of the Wilmette Public Library.

A lawyer from the Reproductive Rights Project of the American Civil Liberties Union will speak about legislation, including the bill's impact on the availability of sex education, prenatal care, contraception and abortion. The balance between "conscience exclusions" for health care providers (the right to refuse to provide services that contravene religious convictions) and the rights of patients to secure those services will also be discussed.

The format for the evening will be a 20-30 minute period for the speaker's remarks, followed by a Q&A session. The standard League procedure of submitting written questions will be adhered to. Please join fellow League members for this informational forum.

Questions? Call Georgia Gebhardt (847)853-8225 / email at ggebhardt@sbcglobal.net (between October 20-28) or direct inquiries to Dorothy Speidel (847)989-4716 / email at d-speidel@northwestern.edu.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Coming Events — 1
President's Message — 2
Officers and Directors — 2
Legislative Interviews — 3
CC Lunch & Learn — 3

Deputy Registrars — 4
Student Government — 4
Election Judges — 5
Calendar — 5
Legislative Interview Re-Cap — 6

Program Notes — 6
Applause, Applause — 6
Legislative Luncheon Re-Cap — 7
LWV-CC — 8

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The local chapters of the League of Women Voters are mandated each year to conduct legislative interviews of their respective state representatives.

This past month, our local league conducted a legislative interview of Julie Hamos (Rep. 9th District). Held at a league member's home and attended by over a dozen league members, this intimate exchange with an elected official was informative and fascinating. Dorothy Spiedel's scintillating recap of the Hamos interview appears in this issue.

Libby Bankoff also reports in this issue of the confirmed dates and times for future interviews: Jeff Schoenberg's interview on October 19 at 7:30 pm and Beth Coulson's interview on October 23 at 1:00 pm. I encourage all of you to mark your calendars, drop whatever else you are doing, and make every effort to attend these next two interviews. This is truly one of the most captivating events you will get to be a part of as a member of our local league. Nothing can compare to talking with your local legislators, unguarded and spontaneous. Here is your opportunity to ask about income tax, pension plans, redistricting, and any other issue that has been gnawing away at you.

In addition to the legislative interviews, our League is going to be very busy in October. Please take the time to read through this month's *Bulletin* to make sure you don't miss out on an event that may be of particular interest to you. And with all these great events coming up, you will have plenty of opportunities to see and visit with many of your fellow Leaguers.

Therese Steinken

2009-2010 ELECTED OFFICERS

President	Therese Steinken
VP/Programs	Georgia Gebhardt
VP/Membership	Libby Bankoff
Treasurer	Susan Morrison
Secretary/Programs	Dorothy Speidel

2009-2010 ELECTED DIRECTORS

<i>Bulletin</i> Editor	Dale Cohodes
Publicity	Judy Mandel
	Jan Peterson
Student Government	Deena Mitchell
	Lali Watt
Voter Services	Heidi Voorhees
	Ellen Falkof
Web Master	Beth Nyhan

2010 NOMINATING COMMITTEE: Cinda Axley, Chair, Dorothy Speidel & Beth Nyhan

**Illinois State Legislative Discussions with
State Senator Jeff Schoenberg
and
State Representative Elizabeth Coulson (17th)**

Are we likely to experience an increase in our State Income Tax? Is the RTA likely to go bankrupt? What is the status of the Illinois State Budget?

Do you want to hear informed responses to these and other timely and important issues/questions? Then, join us at either or BOTH of our League's annual Legislative Interviews.

Our Legislative interview with **State Senator Jeff Schoenberg** will be held on **Monday, October 19, beginning at 7:30 pm at the home of Carole Liebson, 1109 Illinois Road, Wilmette.**

Our Legislative interview with **State Representative Beth Coulson (17th)** will be held on **Friday, October 23, at 1 pm, at her District Office, 3801 W. Lake Ave, NW corner of Lake and Pfingsten), Glenview.** Rep. Coulson requested that the interview be held at her district office.

All Wilmette League members are invited to attend and participate in these informative events. It is an opportunity to learn what is happening and what is likely to happen in our State Assembly/Government from our State Legislators' perspectives. The format will be Q & A and discussion. Of course, refreshments will be served!

**LUNCH & LEARN WITH
THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF COOK COUNTY**

featuring

Cook County Assessor JAMES HOULIHAN

speaking on

"Demystifying the Property Assessment Process"

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 10, 11:30 am to 1 pm

**DePaul Club at the DePaul University Center, 11th floor
1 E. Jackson (corner of State Street and Jackson), Chicago**

cost: \$30 per person (includes a box lunch)

Proceeds benefit The League of Women Voters of Cook County

Reservations are due by Monday, November 2,

but don't delay; last time we sold out over two weeks early!

To make a reservation, call Priscilla Mims at 708-524-1569

Voter Services Update

DEPUTY REGISTRAR ALERT!!

Those of you who are Deputy Registrars sponsored by the Wilmette League of Women Voters need to renew your registration with the Cook County Clerk. This week you will receive a form in the mail from the Voter Services Committee for undertaking this process. The form is called the **Deputy Voter Registrar Oath**. Just fill out the form and send it in to the address at the bottom of the form. Within 30 days you should receive your new commission as a Deputy Registrar. Your new commission will run until November 30, 2010.

If you have never been a Deputy Registrar and are interested in doing so, please contact Voter Services Co-Chair Heidi Voorhees at HeidiJVoorhees@aol.com or by telephone at 847-256-7299. She will let you know when the next training is available. The training takes approximately one hour and typically occurs in Skokie or Evanston. The Cook County Clerk's office schedules the training. If you would like to download the Deputy Voter Registration Oath or learn more about the Deputy Registrar process, please visit the County Clerk's website at www.voterinfont.com. Click on Register, then on Deputy Register. If you scroll down you will find information on renewing your status as a registrar.

We are planning on a December voter registration drive at New Trier and other locations so please renew your Deputy Registrar status so you can participate in this critical part of our electoral process! Last year we registered more than **200** new voters during our voter registration drives.

Student Government Program Kick-Off Date Change!

The kick-off date for this Fall's Student Government Program has changed and is now Thursday, October 8, from 6 - 7 pm, in the Wilmette Junior High School Auditorium. Members are welcome to attend this event to see our crop of students for this year's program.

The mock board meetings for the Wilmette Junior High School students will be on Thursday, November 19, at 1 pm in the MEC for those students working with District 39, and at 7 pm in the Village Chambers, for those students working with the Village. Both mock board meetings will be broadcast live on Local Access Channel 6. The dates for the other schools are still being worked out. The mock board meetings are the culmination of this program, and several workshops involving League members and others take place at each school in preparation.

BE AN ELECTION JUDGE

As a result of the Poll Reporting Project held during the last election, the League of Women Voters of Cook County has identified that one of the biggest impediments to having a smooth voting experience is the lack of election judges.

Help make our democracy thrive. Become an election judge in Suburban Cook County for the **February 2, 2010 Primary Election**. You can sign up by contacting the township committee person of the political party of your choice, or go to www.voterinfonet.com to sign up through the Cook County Clerk's office, which is in charge of elections in suburban Cook County. By law, the political parties initially select people to be election judges, and then the Cook County Clerk fills in the remaining vacancies. Chicago residents who want to serve as judges should contact their ward committeeperson or the Chicago Board of Elections at www.chicagoelections.com.

If you know high school juniors or seniors, please let them know there is a special program where they can become election judges, even though they aren't old enough to vote, if they have a 3.0 out of 4.0 GPA. Again go to www.voterinfonet.com to find out more information.

You'll be paid \$170 for attending a training class and serving as a judge. There is additional pay if you are a "supply judge" or "equipment manager." You'll probably be asked to help set up the polling place the evening before. On election day, you'll work from 5 am through the close of the polls at 7 pm and then until the results are tabulated and all the equipment is stored securely (usually another 1 to 2 hours). It is a long day, but what a sense of satisfaction you'll get by being part of the process!

CALENDAR

OCTOBER 3 - Cook County Matters, 11:00 am – 1:00 pm, Glenview Police Station

OCTOBER 8 - Student Government Kick-Off, 7:00 pm, Wilmette Junior High

OCTOBER 15 - *Outliers: The Story of Success* Book Discussion, 7:00 pm, Wilmette Public Library

OCTOBER 16 - Board Meeting, 1:00 p.m., home of Jan Peterson, 1049 Pontiac

OCTOBER 19 - Legislative Interview with State Senator Jeff Schoenberg, 7:30 pm

OCTOBER 23 - Legislative Interview with State Rep. Elizabeth Coulson, 1:00 pm

OCTOBER 29 - ACLU Presentation, 7:00 pm, Wilmette Public Library

NOVEMBER 10 - Cook County Lunch & Learn, 11:30 am – 1:00 pm, DePaul University Center

LEGISLATIVE INTERVIEW WITH JULIE HAMOS

On September 22, fourteen League members gathered at the home of Mari Terman for a legislative interview with Illinois House 18th District Representative Julie Hamos.

“The Mess in Springfield”

Ms. Hamos went into a detailed account of the situation in Springfield this past spring and summer. After the impeachment of Governor Blagojevich and the selection of a new leader in the Illinois Senate, some members of the legislature felt that a fresh breeze was blowing in Springfield and that perhaps there would be progress on a number of reforms including income tax, Medicaid, ethics, pension and education reform.

Saturday Night Drama

She described the events in Springfield on Saturday night, May 30. Governor Pat Quinn had inherited a mammoth budget deficit. The Senate was about to vote on a budget bill that would have increased the income tax. May 30 was the last day the legislature could pass a bill with a simple majority – after that, a super majority would be needed. It was nip and tuck. Surprisingly, however, that hoped-for fresh breeze seems to have blown through the Senate – the bill passed with more than enough votes!

Then the House met. House Speaker Mike Madigan proposed a budget that would kill the Senate budget. He was not willing to take on any reforms at this time. Madigan is powerful enough that nothing can take place without his support.

Political Will

Ms. Hamos stated that Speaker Madigan is not the only problem. Elections come every two years (for the House and a portion of the Senate) and lawmakers are often not willing to pass any bill close to an election that would increase taxes. Some in Springfield were relieved that Madigan had given them cover.

How will reforms ever take place in Illinois?

Ms. Hamos said the people/voters have to be convinced. How? One way is writing letters to our legislators. Form letters that are easy to email are not very effective. Heartfelt, personal letters are. In fact, Ms. Hamos suggested that just ten such letters can make a difference.

In the near future, our League will meet with both Illinois Senator Jeff Schoenberg and 17th District Representative Beth Coulson. See page 3 of this *Bulletin* for details.

Ms. Hamos also reported that she is trying to work on pension reform and that an informal task force has been set up in the state house and senate. She said that pensions

are going to decimate our budgets. Current teachers, firefighters, and police officers are covered; but there will be no money for future employees. Ms. Hamos also said that a two-tiered system for a pension or contribution plan for new members of the Illinois General Assembly and judges is under consideration.

PROGRAM NOTES

Sunday, October 20, eleven Wilmette Leaguers and their guests trekked to the Oriental Institute at the University of Chicago. To fortify us for our museum experience, we lunched at the Cedars, a Mediterranean restaurant in Hyde Park. The food, incidentally, was delicious!

After lunch, our own Mari Terman led us through several thousand years of Near Eastern history. We saw examples of cuneiform, a replica of the code of Hammurabi, and an Egyptian mummy to name a few highlights. We were fortunate to have Mari as our docent; she truly made the ancient world come alive. There was an unexpected addition to our group when two young Egyptian physicians joined us. They seemed to enjoy the opportunity to share their nation's rich heritage with us and stayed for the whole experience.

Thank you to Mari, not only for being a fabulous docent, but for arranging lunch at the Cedars and driving several of us to Hyde Park! Also, we are grateful to Susan Morrison (and her husband's Suburban) for providing first class transportation and to Dorothy Speidel for her help in organizing the event. It was a terrific way to spend a Sunday afternoon and to experience a gem of a museum, which is one of Chicago's best kept secrets.

APPLAUSE!! APPLAUSE!!

Many thanks should be extended to so many people who, on an ongoing basis, help to make our League strong and vibrant.

However, the following members deserve SPECIAL THANKS FOR STEPPING UP this past month:

MARI TERMAN - for her fabulous job as docent for our tour of the Oriental Institute and for graciously hosting a legislative interview in her home.

LIBBY BANKOFF – for doing a remarkable job coordinating and leading a recent legislative interview and for her efforts in securing legislative interviews of all our locally elected representatives.

Schakowsky Calls for Health Care Reform at Legislative Luncheon

US Rep. Jan Schakowsky (D-9th) addressed League members from Evanston, Wilmette and Skokie at the annual **Legislative Luncheon** on Tuesday, August 25 at the Unitarian Church of Evanston. Speaking to a capacity crowd, Schakowsky opened by listing what she termed the major accomplishments to date of the Obama administration:

- An Executive Order reversing the ban on US aid to international groups that provide family planning services (the so-called “gag rule”);
- The Lily Ledbetter Fair Pay Act, which clarifies workers’ rights to file employment discrimination claims (a 2007 Supreme Court decision had negated Ms. Ledbetter’s claim, saying the clock had run out on her case);
- The Credit Cardholders’ Bill of Rights Act;
- Lifting of federal pre-emption of state rules on auto emissions;
- Creation of new wilderness areas;
- The Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP) Reauthorization Act, preserving coverage for all 7 million children currently enrolled in the program and extending coverage to 4 million more children in low income families;
- Authorizing the FDA to regulate the tobacco industry;
- An Executive Order lifting the lifting the Bush Administration’s ban on federally financed human embryonic stem cell;
- Restoration of Army Field Manual rules regarding interrogations conducted by US intelligence agencies;
- President Obama’s Cairo speech, which “set a new tone for relations with the Muslim world.”

Turning to the main topic – health care reform – Rep. Schakowsky stated that the US ranks 37th globally in quality outcomes, “mostly because so many people don’t have access” to health care. She described the 2009 move for reform as “the opportunity we have now to lift the fear of losing or not being able to pay for health care.”

Alluding to the contentious debate in town hall meetings and other arenas, Schakowsky said, “The fundamental issues get lost in the myths.” She stated her view that a public option is essential to a reform plan, and assured her audience that “no Medicare benefits will be cut. It is not being considered in any way.”

In response to questions posed by League members, Rep. Schakowsky made these comments:

- The cost of health care reform will be paid for through savings generated by a more efficient system that emphasizes preventive care, and by a tax on high-income (over \$250,000) earners.
- Insurance companies will be able to compete with a public option; there is a successful model in Wisconsin. Many people have confidence in their insurance plans, and will not feel compelled to change.
- The apparent failure of bipartisanship in Washington “is not for lack of trying on the part of President Obama. [The administration] is doing concerted outreach and the other side is not buying.”
- She is optimistic that a health care bill will pass after Labor Day. “We probably won’t get everything we want on the first bill. Social Security was amended 24 times. [It’s important] that we create the proper architecture.” She is “very concerned about Afghanistan” and has joined some of her Congressional colleagues in calling on the administration to present “a plan for how we get out.”

Rep. Schakowsky concluded her remarks by stating that achieving health care reform “is dependent on an involved citizenry,” and she thanked the League for its leadership in fostering informed citizen participation.

News from the League of Women Voters of Illinois

Mock Election Grant

We would like to share the good news that the US Election Assistance Commission approved our grant request! Although our entire grant was not awarded to us (we requested \$55,000 and were conferred \$38,000), we hope to find another grantor to make up the difference. Ours was one of 7 grants nationwide and the only returning grantee.

For those of you who participated last year, you may remember that many of the election authorities absorbed some (or all!) of their costs for the program. Since we will be looking at the November 2010 general elections for these mock elections, it may be early to start planning for them, but wanted to keep you aware of what has happened. We will move ahead to ask for more funding.

Keep up your great League work!

Jan Dorner, LWVIL, V.P. Voter Service and Jan Czarnik, LWVIL Executive Director

Census 2010, Complete Count

The League of Women Voters of Illinois has been selected by Governor Quinn as the lead agency for Illinois' Complete Count Committee: "Everybody In . . . No One Left Out!" for Census 2010. This is both a great honor and wonderful opportunity for the League. The State League will work with the Governor's office to help select Complete Count Committee members from non-profit organizations, business community, faith-based organizations and the media, among others. The League of Women Voters of Illinois will work with these organizations and Leagues from the entire state to ensure that Illinois is fully counted.

It is an exciting time for the State League which will be joining efforts with the State of Illinois and the U.S. Census Bureau to create a Complete Count Committee and engage a statewide public education campaign. This will ensure awareness and motivate all residents to complete and return their Census 2010 questionnaire.

COOK COUNTY MATTERS – THE FACTS

THIS IS AN OPPORTUNITY TO LEARN ABOUT COOK COUNTY GOVERNMENT AND HOW IT SPENDS OUR MONEY.

FOLLOWING THE PRESENTATION THERE WILL BE A SPIRITED LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS DISCUSSION. PLEASE BRING YOUR QUESTIONS!!

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 3, 2009, 11:00 AM – 1:00 PM

GLENVIEW POLICE STATION

(NW CORNER OF LAKE AND SHERMER AVES.)

REFRESHMENTS WILL BE SERVED

THIS PROGRAM IS FUNDED BY THE ED FUNDS OF THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF GLENVIEW, EVANSTON, GLENCOE, PARK RIDGE, WILMETTE, & WINNETKA/NORTHFIELD/KENILWORTH