



# VOICE newsletter

Founded in 1959

Representing 15 south suburban communities

March 2024

## The Case Against Coal Tar Sealants

Coal tar sealants are distillation byproducts from the making of coke from coal. They are widely used only east of the Rockies, where coal is a lot more prevalent. The coal tars are mixed with clay, sand and water to seal streets and driveways. These sealants contain polyaromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs), which are often toxic. They are not soluble in water and stick to particles of dust and soil. This increases their concentrations over long time periods. They can be ingested, absorbed through the skin, etc. and get more concentrated as they move up the food chain. They are eventually broken down in the environment by microorganisms. “Human health effects from exposure to low levels of PAHs are unknown.” (CDC.gov)



But should we use coal tars at all when safer substitutes are readily available? Dean Hoegger, the speaker at our January Zoom-only meeting, thinks we should eliminate coal tar sealants. Dean represented the Clean Water Action Council of Northeast Wisconsin, a group started in 1985. *Continued on page 5*

## Caring for New Immigrants

By the middle of February, 2024, about 36,000 new immigrants had arrived unannounced in Chicago from our southern border. What happens to these people when they arrive? One group that has offered food and shelter is Catherine’s Caring Cause, an organization of the Sisters of Mercy. Sr. Rita Specht, a member of the Sisters of Mercy, described to us her experiences with new immigrants.



“There is something between open borders and ‘send ‘em all back’”, she said.

Why do people immigrate?

- Poverty
- Climate change leading to crop failures and lack of food
- Violence
- Reunification with family members

*Continued on page 5*

## *Coming Attractions*

**Monday, March 3: online voter registration ends**

**Saturday, March 9: General Meeting: “Jane Addams”.** Betsy Means returns to help us celebrate Women in History Month. This time she will portray social worker Jane Addams. Pat Clair is chair.

**Thursday, March 14: deadline to apply for a vote-by-mail ballot** *See p. 4 for info*

**Tuesday, March 19: Primary Election.** Polls are open from 6Am to 7PM.

**Wednesday, March 20** at 6:30PM: **Board meeting** at the home of Sheryl Gallaher

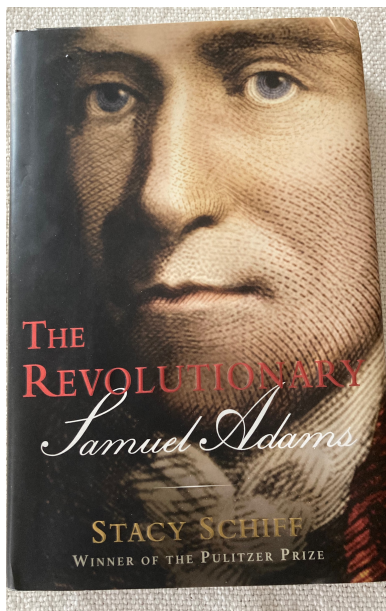
**Saturday, April 13: General meeting: Artificial Intelligence update.** Al Wagner is chair.

**Wednesday April 17 at 6:30PM: (tentative) Board meeting** at the home of Sheryl Gallaher

**Tuesday, April 30 at 7PM: Zoom-only Book Club: *The Revolutionary Samuel Adams***

**Thursday, May 16 at 5:30PM: Annual Meeting** at the Peace Memorial Steak House. *Note that capacity is limited. Get your reservation in early.*

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### **Zoom Book Club: *The Revolutionary Samuel Adams*** by Pulitzer Prize winner Stacy Schiff.

“Thomas Jefferson asserted that if there was any leader of the Revolution ‘Samuel Adams was the man.’ John Adams thought his cousin ‘the most sagacious politician’ of all. With high-minded ideals and bare knuckles tactics, Adams led what could be called the greatest campaign of civil resistance in American history.” – *book jacket.*

Interested? Join us on Tuesday, April 30, at 7PM for what will surely be a lively discussion. Contact Elaine at [esavage124@gmail.com](mailto:esavage124@gmail.com) for a link to this Zoom-only meeting.

## The Co-President's Message: Elaine Savage and Sheryl Szot Gallaher



### Get Involved!

March is Women's History Month, and what a history we've had. I did a bit of research and found these important milestones for women in American Politics

(<https://cawp.rutgers.edu/facts/milestones-women-american-politics> )



- 1848: First Women's Rights Convention at Seneca Falls, New York resulted in a "Declaration of Sentiments" that included the demand for the right to vote.
- 1866: Elizabeth Cady Stanton was the first woman to run for the U.S. House of Representatives (even though she was not eligible to vote)
- 1916: Jeannette Rankin, a Republican from Montana, was the first woman ever elected to Congress, serving in the House from 1917-1919 and again from 1941-1942.
- 1920: The Nineteenth Amendment gave women the right to vote.
- 1920: League of Women Voters was founded as a means of encouraging informed participation by the new female electorate.
- 1932: Hattie Wyatt Caraway was appointed in 1931 to fill a vacancy caused by her husband's death, but ran for a full term and became the first woman elected to the Senate.
- 1933: Frances Perkins was appointed by FDR as Secretary of Labor, making her the first woman to serve in a presidential cabinet.
- 1948: Margaret Chase Smith of Maine was the first woman elected to the Senate without having first been appointed to serve.
- 1968: Shirley Chisholm of New York was the first Black woman to serve in Congress. She served until 1982.
- 1981: Sandra Day O'Connor was appointed by Ronald Reagan becoming the first woman to serve on the U.S. Supreme Court.
- 1984: Geraldine Ferraro was the first woman to run on a major party's national ticket when she was selected as Walter Mondale's running mate.
- 1987: Kay Orr was the first woman elected governor of a state who defeat another woman in a gubernatorial race.
- 1992: Carol Moseley Braun of Illinois was the first Black woman elected to the U.S. Senate.
- 1993: Janet Reno was the first woman to serve as U.S. Attorney General, appointed by President Bill Clinton.
- 1997: Madeleine Albright was the first woman to serve as U.S. Secretary of State, becoming the highest ranking woman in U.S. government (though, as a naturalized citizen, she would not have been eligible to become president).
- 2001: Hillary Rodham Clinton was the first woman elected to the U.S. Senate from New York and was the only First Lady ever elected to public office.

- 2001: Condoleezza Rice was the first woman to hold the post of National Security Advisor, appointed by President George W. Bush, later becoming Secretary of State.
- 2007: Nancy Pelosi became the first woman to serve as Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives.
- 2008: Governor Sarah Palin ran for vice president, becoming the first woman on a national Republican ticket.
- 2020: U.S. Senator Kamala Harris was the first woman elected vice-president.
- 2024: League of Women Voters/Palos Orland Area encourages everyone to vote. It's your right and responsibility.

Elaine and Sheryl

**“Without voting rights for all there is democracy for none”.**

Martin Luther King III

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## **Voting Information for Suburban Cook County Residents** **[cookcountyclerkil.gov/elections](http://cookcountyclerkil.gov/elections)**

### **Register to vote:**

- Online by March 3, 2024
- In person at Early Voting Sites
- In person on Election Day at home precinct [See suburban Cook Registration info]

### **Vote by mail:**

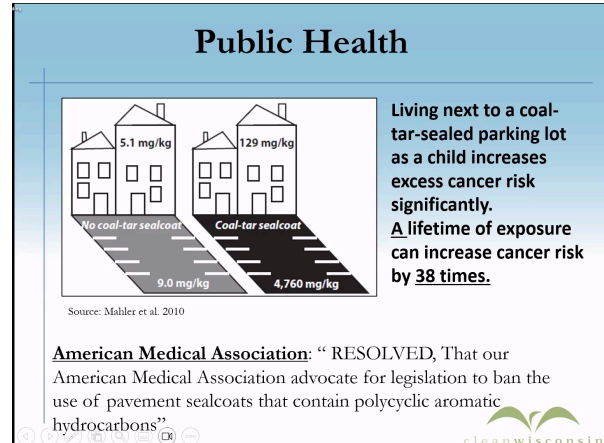
- Apply for a vote-by-mail ballot by March 14
- Completed ballots must be
  - Mailed and postmarked on or before March 19 OR
  - Delivered to a designated secure drop box at Early Voting sites March 14 through March 18 or at the Cook County Clerk's Election office [69 W. Washington St, Chicago - 5<sup>th</sup> floor or the drop box outside the building.]
- Turn in your blank mail-in ballot and vote in person during Early Voting or Election Day.

### **Early voting:** Ends March 18

- At your home precinct OR
- At 69 W. Washington Pedway level in Chicago and at suburban court houses from 6AM to 7PM.

## Coal Tar, continued from page 1

Coal tar, Dean said, “does not protect asphalt pavement, it just makes it look nice”. What are the alternatives? Asphalt emulsion, a petroleum product, used to be much more expensive than coal tar sealants, but now it is a better product and prices are dropping. Latex is still significantly more expensive. Asphalt has not been available in the big box stores, but you can find it online or at Ace hardware stores. Should we worry about percolation of coal tar sealants into our deep wells or ground water? This is not yet a concern, Dean said, because the PAHs are preferentially absorbed by the soil.



The Cook County Board held a hearing on coal tar sealants on February 28, but has not taken further action.

*For more information:*

[cleanwatercouncil.org](http://cleanwatercouncil.org)

[cdc.gov](https://blogs.cdc.gov/niosh-science-blog/2022/07/20/coal-tar-sealants/) for the PAHs biomonitoring fact sheet <https://blogs.cdc.gov/niosh-science-blog/2022/07/20/coal-tar-sealants/>

<https://www.usgs.gov/national-news-release/coal-tar-sealant-runoff-causes-toxicity-and-dna-damage>

## Immigrants, continued from page 1

Who can immigrate legally?

- Parent, spouses and minor children of US citizens are welcome. After 5 years of residency (3 years for spouses) they can become citizens. There is no cap on the number of relatives who can apply for entry.
- Skilled workers can get temporary visas. Unskilled workers are limited to 10,000 visas per year.
- Special provisions have been made for people from Iraq, Afghanistan, Colombia, Venezuela, etc.

*See [travel.state.gov](http://travel.state.gov) for a full list.*

Catherine’s Caring Cause provides rent and utilities for 9 families for 6 months. Apartments are furnished, and clothing is provided. Sr. Rita and her colleagues help register the kids for school, get physicals, learn to use the public libraries and public transportation, and enroll in ESL classes.

*A free will offering was taken up to support Catherine’s Caring Cause.*

The VOICE is published several times per year by the League of Women Voters of the Palos-Orland Area, PO Box 86, Palos Heights IL 60463. Founded in 1959, the League is a non-partisan organization which encourages citizens to play an active role in government at local, state and national levels. The League works to influence public policy through education and advocacy. General meetings are usually held on the second Saturday of the month at 9:30AM at the Palos Heights Library, 12501 S. 71<sup>st</sup> Ave., Palos Heights. Contact Co-President Elaine Savage at [esavage124@gmail.com](mailto:esavage124@gmail.com) VOICE editor is Arlene Wagner, [albert.wagner@comcast.net](mailto:albert.wagner@comcast.net). Editor emerita is Chris Slowik. Email: [palosorlandlwv@gmail.com](mailto:palosorlandlwv@gmail.com) Visit our Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/LeagueOfWomenVotersOfPalosOrlandArea> Website: [lwvpalosorland.org](http://lwvpalosorland.org). Twitter: @LWVPOA

*Just for fun – Cracker Jack salutes women athletes*



**QUIZ TIME!** Since February was the month of Presidents, just how much do you know about the men who have occupied the White House? Just how smart are you feeling?

Who was the first President to:

1. Appear on TV as President
2. Give an address on the radio as President
3. Have running water in the White House
4. Have electricity in the White House
5. Use computers in the White House
6. Travel to Europe while President
7. Use an elevator in the White House
8. Use a telephone at the White House

Answers, please:

1. FDR; 2. Warren G. Harding; 3. John Quincy Adams, who had piped water in for his extensive garden and then pumped water into the White House; 4. Benjamin Harrison (1891); 5. Jimmy Carter; 6. Woodrow Wilson; 7. Chester A. Arthur (1881); 8. Rutherford Hayes