



THE VOTER

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Board of Directors

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IMPORTANT DATES

March 5. General Meeting, Open Primaries.

6:30 pm,
West Peoria City Hall.

March 7. 10 am. City Council Candidate Forum, Peoria Public Library North Branch.

March 8. 2 p.m. Peoria School District 150 Candidate Forum, Peoria Public Library North Branch.

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Our planning meeting for LWVGP on Feb 10 was good. We would like to expand our committee structure with a seasoned Leaguer chairing and mentoring a newer member. We can get more done with stronger committees and it's more fun working as a committee. See the article elsewhere in the Voter for more information. Please don't be shy about volunteering. And if we are not working on a topic that you are passionate about, get involved to get that topic to the forefront.

Don't miss our March 5 meeting on "Open Primaries." Brad McMillan from Bradley's Institute for Principled Leadership is including the topic in a book he is writing. In a way, Illinois already has "open primaries" - we can declare at our polling place in a primary election which political party's ballot we want. In contrast, some states require a voter to re-register if they want to vote in a different political party than they last voted. However, in California they changed to a different form of "open primary" in which the top two vote getters - no matter which political party- go to the general election. So there could be two of one party or one of each party, etc. Interesting topic- join us at West Peoria City Hall at 6:30 pm on Thursday, March 5.

Early voting starts on March 16. Come to a candidate forum. We are holding seven forums! They are:

- The Peoria City Council candidate forum with WCBU on March 7 at 10:00am at the North Branch Library. It will be on live radio and Channel 22 will tape it for broadcast.
- Peoria School District 150 Board candidates March 8 at 2pm at the North Branch Library
- Dunlap School Board candidates on Mon Mar 9 at 7pm at Dunlap Valley Middle School
- Pekin Mayoral candidates March 16 at the Tazewell County Justice Training Room at 7pm
- Pekin City Council candidates March 19 at the Tazewell County Justice Training Room at 7pm
- Washington High School 308 Board candidates on Mon March 23 at 7pm at their school
- East Peoria Mayoral candidates Sat Mar 28 at 10am at the East Peoria Civic Plaza

A big thank you to Tanya Koonce (WCBU) and Leaguers Gary Stella, Roberta Parks, Pat Landes, and Sonni Williams for moderating the forums. And thank you to the timers, greeters, card collectors, coordinators, and Voter Service Chair Mary Jane Crowell.

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(President's Message, continued.)

There was a great turnout at our February Drinks and Dialogue on recycling and what is being done in our region. Thanks to Tracy Fox for explaining the Peoria County Resource Management strategy. Thanks to Pat Landes for setting this up. Several enthusiastic folks would like to meet as a committee on this issue.

Thanks to Joyce Blumenshine and her work putting together the February 5 meeting on carbon emissions standards and the Clean Power Plan. Attorney Andrew Armstrong had much good information.

This is the time we are putting together next year's budget and Nominations Committee is looking for people interested in serving on our Board of Directors. If you are willing to help with budget, email me c_budzinski@hotmail.com. Jan Deissler chairs our Nominating Committee and would like to hear from you at 691-8342.

-- Cheryl

March Drinks & Dialogue at New Location

"Common Core Standards (in education): What are they and why should we care?" is the topic for Drinks & Dialogue, the monthly discussion hosted by our League. This month it takes place on **Wednesday, March 18** at 5:30 pm at a new location, Lariat Steakhouse, 2232 W. Glen, Peoria.

There is no cost to participate, and refreshments are available for purchase. Bring your friends, as the event is always open to the public.

The dialogue will begin with comments from Lisa Uphoff, Field Services Director, IL Federation of Teachers, and former teacher, and facilitated by League members.

Drinks & Dialogue provides an opportunity for people to share opinions and ideas, ask questions, and become more aware of local, state, and national issues and the options for making change. Drinks & Dialogue is offered monthly, on the 3rd Wednesday of the month, for one hour starting at 5:30 pm. Check the League's website, www.lwvvp.org for locations and topics.

SEVEN CANDIDATE FORUMS IN MARCH

Our League is sponsoring seven candidate forums in March. We need volunteers to help with time keeping and collecting question cards. Here are the events:

March 7, Sat, 10:00 am, Peoria City Council @ Peoria Library North Branch

March 8, Sun, 2 pm, Peoria School District #150 @ Peoria Library North Branch

March 9, Mon, 7 pm, Dunlap School District #323 @ Dunlap Valley Middle School

March 16, Mon, 7 pm, Pekin Mayor @ Tazewell County Board Office

March 19, Thurs, 7 pm, Pekin City Council @ Tazewell County Board Office

March 23, Mon, 7 pm, Washington School District #308, Washington High School

March 28, Sat, 10 am, East Peoria Mayor @ East Peoria Civic Plaza

Working these candidate forums is always interesting, fun, and a satisfying experience. Please join us as we provide opportunities for voters to learn more about their choices at the ballot box for the April election. We are the League, where our hands-on work to safeguard democracy leads to civic improvement. Watch for the news releases on these forums for more information.

Illinois Supreme Court Justice Thomas Kilbride will be the speaker at our Annual Dinner meeting on Tuesday, April 21. Mark your calendar!

Thanks to 12 members who participated in our LWVGP Planning meeting on Feb 10. Here are our recommendations. Please volunteer to be on a committee or on the League Board for 2015-16. And thank you to Ron Budzinski for leading us through the planning process.

These committee and program recommendations PLUS any suggestions from you, will be voted on at our Annual Business Meeting in May.

Ron and others stated that if there was too much activity for the number of members willing to do the work well, activities should be prioritized to drop those less important. We identified that Membership, Voter Service, and LOGO were the top priorities.

Committees: Generally committee leadership chairs and vice-chair for each committee.

1. **Membership- Role** is to retain and increase diverse membership and participation in the LWV.

Activities 1- presentations 2- renewal social 3- greeting at events

Recommendations: winter social was taken off their "activities" list ; - phone subcommittee was briefly discussed but since everyone get electronic notices of meetings, it was uncertain if this would increase meeting attendance

2. **Voter Service- Role** is to increase voter education and registrations and facilitate candidate forums

Activities: Communicate with area high schools to register young voters; attend & register new citizens at Naturalization Ceremonies; participate in National Voter Registration Day (Sept), and (if necessary) setup forums for contested candidate races.

Recommendations: Standardizing Candidate Forum format, planning, and execution and celebrating via a social for all involved to discuss the forums and possible suggestions to change them or the planning

3. **Fundraising: Role:** Generate the primary LWV operating funds for 2015-16

Activities: Organize Fall 2015 (Oct or Nov) Fundraiser; and April 2016 Dinner Fundraising event (has included Raffle); and ?? Finance Drive? There was discussion that this is too much fundraising when many complain about dues being high priced.

Recommendations: Having multiple levels of membership on the membership forms

4. **LOGO- Local Government Observers: Role:** Monitor the activities, budgets, and transparency of local government entities

Activities: Currently monitoring: 9 entities.

Recommendations: more Observers, observations leading to local studies, rotation of Observers; put information in the Voter

5. **Drinks and Dialog: Role:** Encourage membership and informal discussion of current issues

Activities: Monthly evening get together at local bar/restaurant to hear brief presentation by subject matter expert, followed by discussion and optional dinner

Recommendations: possibly a quieter venue, good because it is social; not a lot of work for chairs to do to setup but needs someone to do this; don't schedule the whole year's topics since topics might popup that are very current; important to stay monthly and not do quarterly

6. **Communications Strategy(suggested):**

Role: Voter newsletter editor, webmaster, Facebook, and media release sender

Activities: Coordinate LWVGP messages and meeting information to get good media coverage and notice to members of activities

7. **Re-districting Committee (suggested):**

Role: coordinate our participation with LWVIL

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Activities: collecting signatures and educating voters on this issue - unknown whether 2016-18

8. Special Projects Committee (suggested)

Role: if LWWIL or LWWUS have issues to work on specifically such as study updates, and if interested Leaguers will take on Leadership role, can coordinate activities for same. Might include "legislative interviews"

General Meetings (there are 7): Suggested having membership decide which day for General Meetings. Discussion suggested to return **to Saturday morning meetings** because we had better attendance than on Thursday evenings.

We will send an email asking members whether they prefer Saturday morning general meetings or a weeknight evening meeting (if weeknight is chosen, which day-of-the-month/and 5:30 or 6:30pm). We will also ask for meeting location suggestions. (Locations should accommodate 30-50 people and have good parking. Topic interest may be more of an indicator whether people will attend a meeting.) Preference for the same Saturday or of the month day-of-the-week and same location if possible for General Meetings.

Topics discussed:

Criminal Justice	Local Issues
Environment	Solar Technology
Re-Districting	Candidate School
Immigration	(YOUR SUGGESTION)
State Convention Directives	

Suggestion: to include an "Opportunities to participate" list in each Voter

LOGO Report: Peoria City / County Landfill Committee Meeting, Feb. 18, 2015.

Committee Chair Les Bergsten, began the meeting with a report from Foth Engineering on their work at the landfill. Thanks to upgrades in the landfill gas collection, fewer water monitoring wells are showing pollutant increases, although several wells have had repeated exceedances and are in corrective action status with the IEPA. Foth requested approval for recertification of leachate treatment. Leachate is sent to the Peoria Sanitary District for treatment at less than 1 cent per gallon, and the back-up treatment can be sending leachate to the PDC Hazardous Waste Treatment Plant at the edge of Peoria. The budget report showed revenues were down from last year, however expenditures are also down. Waste from the Washington tornado had increase landfill receipts last year. PDC has a meeting with IEPA in March regarding plans for the landfill expansion Cell 3. Army Corps of Engineers approvals for the wetlands mitigation project for Cell 3 which will be focused on the Peoria Park District Vicary Bottoms area are progressing and public notice from the Corps is being prepared. The landfill committee is looking into options for the potential of renewable energy uses at the site such as possible solar panels. Waste Management reported they were completing their annual Cell 2 capacity report for IEPA and that currently the expected duration of space in the open landfill is through 2024. PDC responded that they are anticipating opening Cell 3 in 2020. Waste Management by contract is authorized to operate Cell 2 until that landfill is full.

This committee meets the third Wednesday of each month at 8 a.m. at the Les Bergsten Public Works Building on Dries Lane. For other LOGO reports, see the website.

-- Joyce Blumenshine

LOGO Report: Peoria Township Budget Committee meeting, Feb 24 at 10am.

An agenda and budget information were given to us (Leaguers Elliott Murray and Cheryl B.) at the meeting. This meeting was posted on their website (rescheduled from Feb 16). Councilman Grayeb asked several questions of staff. Their suggestion was that demand is up and money is flat. Nichting indicated that unemployment was up additionally. Grayeb asked if applicants were here from other areas. That was not known since it isn't on the applications. Staff indicated that they had reduced the dollar amount given for Ameren requests since there was such an increased demand for money for Ameren bills. Staff indicated that caseload had gone from 80 to 200 or 280 General Assistance checks. However not as many requests for prescriptions or glasses. Staff indicated that "ObamaCare" may be the reason for that decline in need.

During the "Citizens' comments" I asked several questions about the budget and made the following suggestions:

1. Because Illinois went with the expanded Medicaid option on the Affordable Care Act, low income people (particularly single men with no kids were added to Medicaid) should have medical, dental, eyeglass, and prescriptions available to them. This should be a "zero" line item.
2. Expanding on Mr. Grayeb's question, why don't they ask on the application whether they are from our area or recently moved here? There was a discussion including their attorney on whether asking that question could be challenged in court if the application for vouchers was denied. The attorney will propose possible language to add to the application.
3. Asked where the "eyeglasses/exam" was in the budget summary. (Answer) it is included under General Assistance "Emergency" which for 2015 was lumped together with other services as \$606,000 and under 2016 is listed as \$508,000. I asked why as a service there is no "income eligibility" requirement for eyeglasses/exams and that historically rumor said that retirees would avail themselves of this perk. I asked if the Township Board would consider requiring some income eligibility to get free eyeglasses/exams from the Township.
4. Suggested that considering that Springdale Cemetery was city owned, should people getting burial assistance be encouraged to use Springdale. Staff said that the money for burials is typically used for funeral home part of services.
5. I reminded them that I had again asked for a simple chart of how many people receive what services at what amount at the City Council/Township meeting last Fall at North Branch Library. Council members voiced how simple the request seemed to be. (A sample of Capitol Township's chart was given to each Councilman.) The ensuing discussion ended with Treasurer Nichting and Councilman Grayeb suggesting a simple list by the phone tallying calls with addition of how many General Assistance vouchers were written for what amounts should be doable. Possibly that will be done monthly. Question: how can they do a budget without the number of people served and cost per service considering how some policies (such as Affordable Care Act) should be affecting need for services.

The budget goes to the City Council/Town Board at the beginning of April.

-- Cheryl Budzinski

MARCH GENERAL MEETING

Brad McMillan on Open Primaries

6:30 pm on Thursday, March 5, West Peoria City Hall, 2506 W. Rohmann Ave at Sterling,
West Peoria, IL.



League of Women Voters
of Greater Peoria

623 W. Stratford, Peoria, IL 61614

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

ON THE WEB:

www.lwvqp.org

OPPORTUNITIES TO PARTICIPATE & BRING A FRIEND

- Mar. 5. Thurs., 6:30 pm, General Meeting, "Open Primaries," speaker Brad McMillan
West Peoria City Hall, 2506 W Rohmann Ave, at Sterling, West Peoria 61604**
- Mar. 7. Sat., 10am, Peoria City Council Candidates Forum, North Branch Library, Peoria**
- Mar. 8. Sun., 2pm, Peoria School Dist. 150 Candidates Forum, North Branch Library, Peoria**
- Mar. 9. Mon., noon, LWVGP Board Meeting, Budget Planning, McClure Branch Library, Peoria.**
- Mar. 9. Mon., 7pm, Dunlap School Board 323 Candidate Forum,
Dunlap Valley Middle School (Spartan Theatre) 13120 N Rt. 91 Dunlap 61525**
- Mar. 16. Mon. 7pm, Pekin Mayor Candidate Forum,
Tazewell Co. Justice Center Community Room, 101 S. Capital, Pekin**
- Mar. 18. Wed. 5:30pm Drinks & Dialogue, "Common Core Standards" in Education,
note location change Lariat Steakhouse, 2232 W. Glen Ave. Peoria**
- Mar. 19. Thurs. 7pm, Pekin City Council Candidate Forum,
Tazewell Co. Justice Center Community Room, 101 S. Capital, Pekin**
- Mar. 23. Mon. 7pm, Washington High School Dist 308 Candidate Forum,
Washington High School 115 Bondurant St. (enter Jefferson St, left door) 61571**
- Mar. 28. Sat. 10am, East Peoria Mayor Candidate Forum, East Peoria Civic Plaza,
Fondulac Library Building, 400 Richland St., East Peoria 61611**
- Mar. 23, Mon. noon, LOGO at Lakeview Library, Peoria**
- April 21, Tues. LWVGP Annual Dinner - Hon.Supreme Court Justice Thomas Kilbride, speaker**
- June 6-7. Illinois LWV Convention.**

Mar. 16. Early voting begins.

April 7. Consolidated Election - GO VOTE!