



THE VOTER

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IMPORTANT DATES

Feb. 5. General Meeting, Clean Power,
6:30 pm, West Peoria City Hall.

Feb. 10. Our League's Program Planning,
Schnucks, Peoria.

Feb. 18. Drinks & Dialogue, 5 pm,
Kelleher's, Peoria.

Feb. 23 LOGO noon,
Lakeview Library.

Continued on back page.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

It was a good interactive meeting on Saturday Jan 17. Big thank you to Mary Jane Crowell for leading us through the LWVIL positions and our proposed "Action Focus" for 2015-17. Thank you to Hedy Elliott for presenting the Charter Schools update information and leading the discussions. Lisa Uphoff and Carol Hedeman helped to answer questions. And co-chair Jan Deissler was missed.

Don't miss our **Feb. 5 meeting**. Andrew Armstrong an attorney with Environmental Law and Policy, an expert on the Clean Power Plan, is our speaker. (It's at West Peoria City Hall at 6:30 pm)

Our League Board decided to hold our February meeting on local "Program Planning" and encourage our membership to join us. The meeting is Tuesday **Feb. 10** at 5:30 at Schnucks. (Going into the store, turn left and continue past the office space - it's glass enclosed just past the bathrooms.) You may purchase dinner/beverage from the deli area if you want and bring it into the meeting.

We are exploring putting together a "Unit" of our League in Pekin. If you know anyone who lives in the Pekin area who may be interested in joining League and working with others from Pekin and us, please email to me their names/phone/email and we will get them in contact with that organizing group.

Mary Jane Crowell and I sent emails to (all) 17 high school principals in Peoria County and (all) seven principals in Tazewell County explaining online voter registration for their students who will turn 18 by April 7. We want to encourage a lifelong habit of voting! And, registering to vote is the first step. We included in our email, suggestions from the three election authorities in our area. And, we included information on becoming student election judges including one of their applications. We quickly heard back from two principals thanking us. More young people should vote!

We need many helpers for our candidate forums. We need moderators, timers, question collectors and checkers. And, all members are greeters at our forums. We are setting these up for March since we start Early Voting on March 16. (Peoria County is a heavy Early Voting county.) Candidate forums: Dunlap School Board is set for Mon. Mar. 9 at 7pm; Pekin mayoral and Pekin city council for March 24 & 10; Peoria City Council March 7 at 10:30am; PSD 150 March 8 at 2pm; Washington School Board; and East Peoria mayor are in the works.

Continued p. 2

(President's Message, continued.)

There was a good turnout at our Drinks and Dialogue meeting on Citizens United. Thanks to Bill Knight for explaining and updates. Thanks to Pat Landes for setting this up.

Hope to see you February 10 at 5:30. We plan for programs our members want and are willing to help with.

-- Cheryl

Our League's Program Planning **WHAT DO YOU WANT TO WORK ON IN 2015-16?**

Join us on Tuesday, February 10 at 5:30 at Schnucks' (University at Glen) Community Room.

Our League works on issues that interest our members. We need to know what your ideas are to improve our area or Illinois. Are there topics that need to be explored - a particular speaker, an issue, or a possible "local study" that we can make a difference by illuminating?

This meeting is the time to brainstorm topics and the calendar.

How will we look at issue suggestions?

1- look at our local positions, LWVIL positions, and LWVUS positions to see if that issue is already covered by a position. If that is the case, should we study the local stats and interview those affected or providing service in that issue?

2- topic is not covered at all by existing positions, should we do a study of the issue?

League members and community would have to be willing to do the work. We are all volunteers so we need many hands to get projects done. And, we would have to project what expenses to cover and fundraisers to fund that effort.

The McLean League completed a study of mental health services in McLean County looking at what services are lacking; who are the underserved; what agencies are providing services; and governments' role in funding the services. They are in the "action" phase of their study. Several leaders from McLean League presented information (at my invitation) last summer to illustrate how they successfully included over 25 people who interviewed 50 agencies/individuals to compile information needed to get a consensus at their League.

The Program for 2015-16 is decided by our members at our Annual Business Meeting May 7.

Hope to see you Feb 10 at 5:30 at Schnucks to start the process. (Turn left inside the store and go passed the office area and bathrooms. The door is at an angle. PLEASE grab a bite to eat/beverage at the deli and bring it into the meeting - no "outside" food allowed.) Can't make the meeting? E-mail your ideas to me at: c_budzinski@hotmail.com

ACTION FOCUS REQUEST FOR LWVIL 2015-17

At our January 17 general meeting to review and recommend items for LWVIL Program Planning, our members voted to endorse the following and direct president Budzinski to send to the Issues Committee to forward to all local leagues asking them to also recommend this "Action Focus:"

Action Focus Recommendation: Our League is excited and ready to work on:

Item: The League of Women Voters of Greater Peoria energetically asks that your League request that Redistricting Reform be included in the "Action Focus" for 2015-17.

Based on the following LWVIL/LWVUS position: Action to be taken is based on the LWVIL State Redistricting Position.

Scope: The scope is to work to get a Citizen's Initiative on Redistricting on a General Election Ballot after reviewing any new proposal for appropriateness for LWVIL support.

Rationale: while we were very disappointed that the referendum did not get on the ballot in 2014, this is such an important change for Illinois that we are willing to work on this a third time. 2014 Yes for independent Maps might have had a different outcome if LWVIL had a more decisive role on the organization's committee specifically regarding the specifics in the petitions, the logistics, and how money was spent. Our Leaguers spent a lot of time, energy, and money on the effort AND we have new members because of the work on this issue.

With that in mind, we would ask that a part time staff person be hired to work on this specifically and that the campaign be ready to send energized LWVIL conventioneers home with the tools they need to immediately start working on this effort.

We need to continue to build on those hundreds of thousands of signatures we gathered, and showcase this initiative as a perfect example of how citizens in Illinois can work with us to make democracy work.

Come to hear Andrew Armstrong, attorney with Environmental Law and Policy (Chicago) speak about the **Federal Clean Power Plan and what it means to Illinois.**

**Time and place: 6:30 pm on Thursday, February 5
at the West Peoria City Hall at 2506 W Rohmann Ave 61604**

Andrew works on clean air litigation and policy advocacy challenging coal plants, as well as on other litigation and policy issues. He previously served as an Assistant Attorney General in the Office of the Illinois Attorney General's Environmental Bureau, litigating environmental enforcement actions. He will explain what has been proposed in the new regulations and what the states, environmental groups and industry have been saying about them.

The new federal guidelines in the Clean Power Plan focus on a long unregulated area of power plant pollution from carbon dioxide. Fossil fuel-fired power plants caused 32 percent of all CO₂ pollution in the U.S. in 2012, according to the US EPA. They are the largest source of greenhouse gas pollution.

His Current Projects are:

Chicago Clean Energy; Cleaning Up Coal Plants

The ELPC website is: <https://elpc.org/about>

Bring your friends. This is important for the air we breathe.

Consensus Meeting Report

Twelve members participated on Jan 17 at our consensus meeting for the Charter School Study update. Hedy Elliot, our co-chair, presented the information using the LWVIL PowerPoint presentation.

Other committee members used the "yes no" listing by LWVIL to state "other side of the issue" information as needed. Sometimes the wording or vagueness of study questions led us to "no consensus."

Clearly the group felt the elected school board should be the dominant decision makers with charter schools since public money is spent. However, since public schools may not meet various listed standards, it was the discussion that charter schools shouldn't be held to a higher requirement than the local schools specifically in pupil performance and truancy.

There was no agreement in the area of finances, and we criticized the LWVIL questions for not including questions on funding charter schools' capital expenditures and lack of transparency on that issue.

There was agreement with full transparency and accountability similarly to requirements for local public schools. That is not the perception of what is happening.

We had agreement with LWVIL's current position on "An area of opportunity resulting from charter schools is increased parental choice." We disagreed that the advantages largely outweigh the disadvantages and had no consensus on the "innovation" question.

Our specific answers go to LWVIL. Their Charter Schools Study Committee will collate all the local Leagues' results and make a recommendation to the LWVIL Board who may make a recommendation to the membership at the June convention.

-- Cheryl Budzinski, recorder 1/17/15

Our Program Planning Work on Jan. 17

LWV of Greater Peoria gathered to help create a viable and action oriented program for Illinois that will enable us to move our public policy forward in the next 2 years.

Time was spent reviewing our positions on Representative Government, Natural Resources, and Social Policy. There was interesting and informative discussion in this process.

We agreed to retain all of the current positions, with the exceptions of State Fiscal Policies and Charter Schools- those are in the "working on" category.

Following the planning session, we received the report from our Charter School committee study. The report from that interesting topic is another part of this issue.

We plan to continue working on State Redistricting as soon as there is something to do.

This is the first part of preparing for our State Convention in June where the program for 2015-17 will be voted on. Peoria will be participating there.

-- Mary Jane Crowell

Recycling is topic of February 18 League program

The current status and future possibilities of recycling will be discussed at "Drinks & Dialogue," at 5:30 p.m. Wednesday, February 18 at Kelleher's, 619 SW Water St., Peoria.

There's no cost to participate, and refreshments are available to buy.

The dialogue about recycling will be opened with comments from Tracy Fox, a well known recycling advocate, 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 p.m. at Kelleher's with local and national political topics.

Observer report: Washington City Council Jan 21, 2015

Meeting started at 6:30 and adjourned prior to 7. Channel 22 records the meetings. Two print reporters attended. Agendas were available. The meetings are usually on 1st and 3rd Mondays, but due to holiday, met on Tuesday at the Fire Station Training room. Agenda and notice of location change was posted online.

The mayor, eight aldermen, city clerk, city manager, various department heads sit at the table. Of note from the meeting:

- discussed a raffle license request from previous meeting that wasn't on the agenda
- saved \$41,000 in interest and fees on bonds
- changed some liquor licenses
- authorized downtown TIF agreements
- staff reported reimbursement requests to fix roads that had overweight trucks during tornado recovery work
- staff reported 433 rebuilding permits. Some others may not have had permits. 63 lots are not fixed. They have until the end of May to take foundations out. If there is no foundation, the owner may build or not. There was a dangerous condition deadline of last Nov. (*continued on p. 5*)

Washington City Council continued. There was little discussion on items. It was explained that they meet the 1st and 3rd Monday but use a Committee of the Whole meeting the second Monday to "discuss" agenda items. More on this after a few more meetings.

-- Laura and Cheryl

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE REPORT – Jan. 2015

January events were well attended by new and prospective members:

- A Great New Year's Resolution: Making Democracy Work!, an orientation meeting for new and prospective members had 2 prospective and 2 new members attend.
- The LWVIL Positions and Charter School meeting resulted in 2 people joining on the spot to be able to participate in these key discussions.
- Drinks & Dialogue topic on Citizens United attracted 3 prospective members.

This League year, starting in July 2014, has seen our League grow with 28 new members. Please make sure you welcome them and share opportunities for them to participate.

Welcome new members:

Jeffrey Adkins-Dutro
Karen Adkins-Dutro
Pat Barton
Linda Bolliger
Barbara Carraway
Sharon Crews
Josh Haywood
Sherry Hillman
Beth Jensen
Pamela Johnson
Perry Johnson
Bill Knight
Terry Knight
Kathleen Leson
Bill Mahl

Larry Matthews
Rob Parks
Linda Pendergast
Jill Peterson
Kathie Raiborn
Debbie Ritschel
Ann Rosenberg
Marge Semmens
Sandy Stemler
Gale Thetford
Sonni Williams
Brenda Wilson

Now that the Drinks & Dialogue program is established, we are looking for someone (or two people) to take the program over for 2015/16. Program management, for one or two volunteers, would include the following activities and time:

1. Determine topics and location for the year, 2 hours
2. On monthly basis, 2 hours (which includes attending the event)
 - a. Secure and confirm speaker
 - b. Write press release and VOTER article (standard template available)
 - c. Attend Drinks & Dialogue meeting, introduce speaker, help moderate discussion
 - d. Send thank you to speaker

Please contact Pat Landes (309-648-3504 or landes.pat@gmail.com) if you would like to discuss it, have any questions, or would like to volunteer.



League of Women Voters
of Greater Peoria

623 W. Stratford, Peoria, IL 61614

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

ON THE WEB:

www.lwvqp.org

IMPORTANT DATES

Feb. 5. Thurs., 6:30 pm, General Meeting, “Clean Power”, West Peoria City Hall, 2506 W Rohmann Ave, at Sterling, West Peoria, IL.

Feb. 10. Tues., 5:30 pm, Board Meeting but all members invited, Program Planning, Schnucks, University at Glen, Peoria.

Feb. 18. Wed. Drinks & Dialogue, 5:30 pm, Kelleher’s, 619 SW Water St., Peoria.

Feb. 23 LOGO- noon at Lakeview Library, 1137 W. Lake Ave., Peoria.

March 5. Thurs., 6:30pm General Meeting, “Open Primaries,” West Peoria City Hall

March 7, Sat, 10:30am Candidate forum Peoria City Council.

March 8, Sun, 2pm Candidate forum Peoria School District 150.

March 9, Mon, 7pm Candidate forum Dunlap School District.

Mar. 16. Early voting begins.

April 7. Consolidated Election.

June 6-7. Illinois LWV Convention.