



The League of Women Voters of Greater Peoria

# THE VOTER

Volume 70, Issue 7

June 2017

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## **IMPORTANT DATES**

**Thursday, June 15,**  
9:30 am, Environmental  
Issues Group, Panera's off  
Knoxville. Peoria.

**Wednesday, June 21 5:30**  
pm. Drinks & Dialogue,  
Single Payer Healthcare,  
Lariat Steakhouse, 2232  
W. Glen, Peoria.

## **PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**

What an honor it is to be elected to serve as President of League of Women Voters of Greater Peoria, a vibrant and growing organization of dedicated people coming together to ***Make Democracy Work!***

To build on the enthusiasm and energy of our members, the LWVGP leadership team has put together an exciting array of activities for the upcoming year as evidenced in this edition of The Voter. As you read through the various reports, you will immediately see that there are multiple opportunities to share your gifts and talents. So, we invite you to please think about the areas that interest you and how you might want to get involved.

Our leadership team will be using the Interest Survey information to reach out to members about getting involved. We also encourage you to personally contact the team member that leads a project that you want to explore or join. If you have general questions about the projects or contacts, please contact me and I will be happy to be of assistance.

We are fortunate this year to be sending the following six delegates to the League of Women Voters of Illinois convention on June 10-11 in Des Plaines: Farrell Davies, Terry Matthews, Connie Romanus, Elaine Hopkins, Sandy Stemler, and Ray Keithley. Our delegation will report in the July Voter on updates from the convention.

Please be sure to check the Upcoming Dates for a list of events. And, **mark your calendar for the Summer Renewal Social on July 19<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 PM at the Peoria Women's Club, 301 NE Madison, Peoria.** This event is a wonderful chance to get to know each other and to renew our commitment to the LWVGP!!!

I look forward to working side-by-side with you as we ***Make Democracy Work!!!***  
-Farrell Davies, President

## **DRINKS & DIALOGUE on JUNE 21: SINGLE PAYER HEALTHCARE**

Not a day goes by without hearing about healthcare in the news. Affordable Healthcare, American Healthcare, Medicare, Universal Healthcare: which is truly the most affordable, provides the most medical coverage, while also limiting overwhelming costs for business owners and individuals?

Luan Railsback, a Peoria-area activist who has been advocating for single payer healthcare for over a decade, will review the pros, cons, and misconceptions of Single Payer Healthcare, and discuss insurance costs for individuals and business owners.

Join us for Drinks and Dialogue at 5:30 pm on **June 21 at the Lariat Steakhouse, 2232 W. Glen, Peoria.** for a lively discussion and to have your questions answered.

-- Molly Schumacher

## **LOGO - Local Government Committee**

For a League to be effective in a community it must promote the understanding of how local government works. Local League Observers learn about how government works and about issues that are or may become items for local League **study and action**. Consistent League presence at these meetings can add to the League's visibility and credibility. Sometimes an Observer may recommend that the League President send a letter about an issue that was observed or to thank that government.

The history of our League which was founded in 1924, includes many issues with our boot print on it. Observers pick a unit of government to observe - usually one that they pay taxes to. Consideration should include how many times a month they meet, the time, and the location - whether that meets your schedule and time restraints.

Try to attend all those meetings - usually once or twice a month, but you won't make every meeting. Write up a report and it may be included in the Voter and will be on the website. A seasoned Observer will attend your first and second meeting and help you learn what we typically write about. (You don't take minutes.) You can do this with a friend, too.

I have been surprised when someone asks me why an Observer report for a certain government wasn't in the Voter that month. (Sometimes the Observer is gone on vacation, etc.) People look for our reports. We have had Observers at the following, but need a new Observer for: Peoria Park District, Peoria Public Schools, Peoria City Council, Washington City Council, Peoria County Board, Tazewell County Board, Woodford County Board. Many and more opportunities. LOGO will be revisiting the eTransparency project this summer. (See Rick's article.) LOGO also has interest in "Shared Services" - whether governments are duplicating efforts that could be collaborative to save resources. email me: LOGO@lwgvp.org

-- Cheryl Budzinski, LOGO Chair

## **LOGO REPORT: Springdale Cemetery management authority meeting May 16, 2017.**

The annual audit report was reviewed with nothing extraordinary of note. The manager reports improved sales volume & inquiries for lots with a very slow start this year, with remarkable progress recently. He reported serious erosion issues as the result of recent rain events. The City of Peoria has help evaluate storm drains and staff has indicated the need to re-engineer many on the site. The manager reported that in the process of the cell tower electric hook-up the sewer pipe was damaged.

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He reported on a meeting with Illinois Nature Preserves staff to identify its position on "Prairie Gardens" scattering area development. The Prairie Folklore Theater will have a performance on Mt. Mary's Hill, June 4. The Springdale Foundation is losing Janet Barnes who is leading fund raising. They are looking for someone to replace her.

-- Rick Fox

### **2017 eTransparency Survey - Volunteers Needed**

In July we will perform our survey of information available on the internet related to how to engage with local governments. We need your help, and are looking for volunteers to assist with these surveys. In early July there will be a meeting to review the process, and assign which governments are to be surveyed. In the meantime please contact Rick Fox ([rick@rickdfox.com](mailto:rick@rickdfox.com) or 309-369-5330) to volunteer, or to ask questions.

### **Your Voice! Make it heard in our community and beyond**

Leaguers Mary Ardapple and Cheryl Budzinski have developed an exciting ICC class for people to learn to leverage "their voice" more effectively when advocating for change. Our League is in partnership with ICC, NAACP Peoria Branch, Young Professionals of Peoria County, and Peoria County to take the energy from recent political disarray to hopefully focus passions to advocate for change and better our community.

"**Your Government, Your Voice**" will include in the first session: local, federal and state officials explaining how a bill becomes law, resources and tracking your issue, lobbying elected officials, and "Do they listen?"

The second class is about styles of communication with emphasis on social media. A subject matter expert and two recently elected officials who successfully used social media will tell us what worked.

Two successful campaign managers and an elected official who has shown what one voice can do, will present the third class on commitment to change.

Here is the registration link for the class:

<http://campusce.icc.edu/acp/course/course.aspx?C=3016&pc=18&mc=&sc=>

Enrollment is limited to 24. All of the \$45 registration fee goes to ICC. This class will be the first, second, and third Mondays of June at 6:30- 8:30pm at ICC Peoria.

### **HUG A TREE ON JUNE 15**

The Environmental Issues group will meet Thursday, June 15th, 9:30 a.m. at Panera's off of North Knoxville. Several new League members are attending, and you are warmly invited also!

This informal discussion will consider ideas for a topic the group wishes to pursue and also look at what other Leagues in Illinois have done regarding protecting their communities from coal tar sealants, which are toxic. Bring your ideas!

Contact Joyce Blumenshine 309-678-1011 / [joblumen@yahoo.com](mailto:joblumen@yahoo.com) for more information.

## **LOGO REPORT: Peoria City / County Landfill Committee, May 14. 2017**

The Landfill Committee held their second meeting in their new location, Room 404 Peoria City Hall. Meetings are at 3 p.m. on the third Wednesday of each month. Chairman Steve Morris and the committee members present heard public comments regarding a concern about roof shingles being dumped on Murphy Road. A local resident said he phoned the County Sheriff, but was unhappy because nothing appeared to be done until the Township Supervisor got the mess cleaned up. Mr. Morris said he would personally look into it.

Another public comment regarded Senate Bill 1561, which was passed in the Illinois Senate and is now moving quickly through the House. Revised language in the bill amends the state Solid Waste Planning and Recycling Act to clarify that any county with a population of less than 2 million residents cannot adopt an ordinance or resolution, with certain exceptions, or impose regulations on the operations of a municipal solid waste landfill unit, sanitary landfill, storage site, transfer station, or waste disposal site, as long as the facility obtains specified permits. Nothing in this regulation will diminish or impair existing siting authority or limit a county to prepare, adopt, or implement a specified plan. This legislation was said earlier to be at the behest of the waste industry to prevent down-state counties from imposing additional fees and regulations, such as was done in Cook County.

During the Foth Engineering report a new "Procedures for General Refuse and Special Waste Received at the City of Peoria/County of Peoria Landfill No. 2" was distributed, and it is a helpful directory of guidelines and forms. Groundwater monitoring was reported to have shown increases in dissolved chloride, acetone and chromium. Additional testing will be done. Garbage tonnage was down again with April about 2,000 tons below last years' amount.

No representative from Waste Management, who operates the current Landfill Cell 2, was at the meeting. Chris Coulter, PDC, said that PDC landfills have noted lower amounts coming in also. The lower tonnage affects the landfill budget which is based on gate receipts. If the trend continues a deficit is expected and ways to modify the budget will be reviewed.

- Joyce Blumenshine, Landfill Committee Observer

### **Voter Service Report**

We appreciated the annual meeting on May 4. This committee is taking a sweet breather for a bit. We are looking forward to a Naturalization Ceremony on Wed. Sept. 20 at the Civic Center with about 500 new citizens! I am very happy to have 9 new names to add to the list of people interested in being registrars and/or serving on the committee. Thank you all as we look to a fresh start for the next year!

-- Mary Jane Crowell

## **Logo Report: Peoria City Council, May 23, 2017**

Walking up Fulton St. Tuesday night, I noticed neat row of fancy rentable bicycles in front of city hall. These bikes were one of more interesting proclamations at the beginning of the Peoria City Council meeting. The Enjoy Peoria Cycle new bike sharing program was highlighted and it sounds impressive. Mobile app access to this activity is easy and a great idea. Please check it out.

<http://www.pjstar.com/news/20170519/peoria-area-gets-bike-friendly-with-new-rental-program>.

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McFarland A. Bragg II, who currently serves as the President/CEO of Peoria Citizens Committee for Economic Opportunity, Inc, was honored during the recognition of National Community Service Month. He has served PCCEO in some capacity for 40 years, taking on his current position in 1993. Mr. Bragg advocated for citizens to reach out to their State a Federal representatives and push for the retention of current community programs on budget chopping blocks.

The 120th anniversary of St. Mark's School was also celebrated. Its pastor praised the institution's embracing of the immigrant community and commented that it is the most diverse parish in the diocese.

The night moved along quickly, without At-Large Councilman Eric Turner, and 4th District Rep Jim Montelongo joining electronically.

Newly elected Peoria Township Supervisor, Frank Abdnour was briefly quizzed during the "Communications" portion of the meeting. At-Large Rep Beth Jensen noted some issues with the "general fund expenses" and more time was given to Abdnour to gather information.

Interestingly, in his comments, the Supervisor mentioned that the township is looking to raise General Assistance payouts and is exploring a "water bill relief program" for residents. More interestingly, 2nd District Rep Chuck Grayeb mentioned that the Township board is planning to increase its "levy." To this writer's knowledge, that means a tax hike.

Consent Agenda: \$280,000 was appropriated for the construction of two new homes on Berhends Ave, from the IL Attorney General's National Foreclosure Settlement Funds. These homes are a continuation of a program that began last year on the East Bluff. At-Large Rep Beth Akeson expressed worry that these homes might be over-priced for the neighborhood and put new owners in financial bind. The properties will sell for and be appraised between \$80,000-\$90,000.

Second District Rep Tim Riegenbach assured the Council that the homes are part of a concentration of similarly priced homes in the area and blend in well with the neighborhood. The two previous properties sold within 30 days and are a great asset to his District.

This program has not yet expanded to Peoria's 1st District. First District Rep Denise Moore questioned city staff on the minority makeup.

Agenda item 17-149 devoted \$68,000 to a Community Risk Assessment and Strategic Plan for the Peoria Fire Department

The City's long held "growth cell strategy" was hotly contested next. At-Large Rep Akeson took the City to task with a blistering critique of continued expenditures on the construction of a new road between Pioneer Parkway and Townline Road.

Akeson contended this project is "foolish". Sometimes referred as "the road to nowhere," this project has been in the works since the beginning of the century and would support no current business or resident, as it lies in open corn fields.

Akeson demanded that existing crumbling roads, i.e. Lake, Willow Knolls and Glen, be serviced instead of chasing future unknown money in the edge of the city. She grilled City staff on the large number of currently vacant commercial buildings to emphasize her point.

She labeled "embracing urban sprawl" as "crazy" and "totally foolish". Peoria's heritage neighborhoods are the

heart of our community and have countless issues that need addressing before city expansion.

Second District Rep Grayeb pounded his desk with an impassioned push back, while 5th District Councilman Denis Cyr (who represents the District in dispute) sat silent. Grayeb contended that the Federal funds currently offered to this project, might not exist in the future, so the City needs to use it or lose it.

The project is 80% federally funded, with local taxes paying the rest. Five minutes later however, under questioning from At-Large Rep Beth Jensen, the City Manager admitted that the source of funds for the vast remainder of this nearly \$80,000,000 project is yet unknown. He cited several possible Federal and State revenue streams that might be directed to this project.

Additionally, Mayor Jim Ardis aggressively voiced support for city expansion, calling it a “smart investment.” He added “city growth and expansion does not equal urban sprawl.” The measure passed, with Akeson voting the only “No.”

Peoria’s growth cell policy is thought outdated and wasteful by many. Jensen moved for more public input on this issue.

New Business: Denise Moore announced the closure of the grocery store Sav-a-Lot on Western Ave. Moore said competition from convenience stores led to lost sales. She blamed residents for not shopping there, then said she had sealed the deal to bring in Sav-a-Lot without any incentive or help from the city.

Grayeb then asked city staff to look into the Peoria’s discrimination ordinances, to better address racism by liquor stores in his district. The request is in response to recent calls to boycott Main Street Liquors. The boycott was accompanied by recent public demonstrations in front of the store. Store staff have been accused of hate speech and discrimination against the black community.

Citizens Address Council: Two residents echoed Akeson’s criticism of Peoria’s growth cell strategy. They pointed out the neglect of Peoria’s heritage neighborhoods, in the aspects of crime, vacant buildings and economic development. Quotes like “we can’t tie growth to the past” and pleas to “fix our dying city” were heartfelt and genuine.

Once again the Council adjourned to their non-FOIAable Executive Session. The contents of this meeting cannot publicly be known until the council releases the minutes.

– David Berry, Peoria City Council Observer

## Action Plan for new local position on Water Distribution System

Interested in working on our Action Plan and educating the public on our League's position?

We need people who:

- think "outside the box"
- have marketing savvy
- have fundraising experience
- can arrange and do presentations
- have time to do specific volunteer stuff
- are fearless promoters of our League position

Call Cheryl 253-9594

## Observer Report: Peoria Heights Village Board of Trustees, May 16, 2017

Mayor Phelan started the meeting at 6:30. Trustee Reichert was absent. Trustee reports on specific areas: Nothing to report for: Economic Development/Village Improvements; Building/Property Maintenance; Fire; and Administration/Personnel. Police Benevolent dinner will be May 19 from 5-8 at Peoria Heights Grade School. Public Works reported the light pole blocking the new parking lot next to the old Grayboy building will be moved.

Comments from the audience:

- a) The Suburban Lions Club of Peoria Heights will be celebrating the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Lions Club on June 10<sup>th</sup> at Lions Park in Peoria Heights. They will have food, guest speakers, and activities all day.
- b) The Peoria Heights Fire Department will be celebrating the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the department on July 15, 2017. There will be a parade through Peoria Heights at 9 A.M., speakers at Village Hall starting at 10 A.M., food from 11 A.M.-7 P.M., and a band from 4-7 P.M.

New Business:

- a) Special Use Permit for Jim Simmons was reapproved to permit him to fix lawn mowers from his home. Approved 5-0.
- b) A grant was accepted from the Illinois Housing Development Authority's Abandoned Residential Property Municipal Relief Program to help pay for the demolition of abandoned house in Peoria Heights. Approved 5-0.

Meeting adjourned at 6:57pm.

-- Observer Charles Schneider, Peoria Heights High School, Class of 2018, President

## WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

Our League continues to grow. We have 7 new members since the last Voter. Thanks to Pat Landes and the membership committee we now have 153 members. It is apparent people are looking for educational programming as well as involvement in voter services. Members have been involved in a number of candidate forums not only in Peoria, but through the Greater Peoria area. Thanks to all who join and jump in to assist.

We welcome new members from the past month:

- James Runyan
- Mary Peifer
- Joy Rennich
- Brittney Ferrero
- Velma Watson
- Cecily Scott Martin

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### Thank you for your support

Since 100% of regular dues' payment goes to the LWVIL and LWVUS, we need to raise money through fundraisers and donations to pay for our operating expenses. At this time we would like to acknowledge those members that selected the Defenders of Democracy membership category as a way to donate to LWVGP. Thank you for your additional support!

- Eleanor Roosevelt Members:
  - Lori Hanson
  - Tracy & Rick Fox
- Carrie Chapman Catt members:
  - Carol & Allan Hedeman
  - Elliott Murray
  - Lisa Uphoff
- Susan B. Anthony members:
  - Bettsey Barhorst
  - Shirley Belke (Life Member)
  - Joyce Blumenshine & David Trachtenbarg
  - Jerry Brady
  - Cheryl & Ron Budzinski
  - Katherine Coyle
  - Nancy Clemmer (Life Member)
  - Farrell Davies
  - Jan & Emil Deissler
  - Sherry Hillman
  - Dave Koehler & Nora Sullivan
  - Sue Ann Kortkamp
  - Pat Landes
  - Kathleen Leson
  - Larry & Terry Matthews
  - Michael McCuskey
  - Roberta Parks
  - Irene Pritzker
  - Kathie Raiborn
  - Carolyn Shepherd
  - Sandy Stemler
  - Connie Torrey-Romanus
  - Sonni & Dick Williams



League of Women Voters  
of Greater Peoria

623 W. Stratford, Peoria, IL 61614

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

ON THE WEB:

[www.lwvqp.org](http://www.lwvqp.org)

**IMPORTANT DATES**

**Monday, June 12, Noon, LWVGP Board Meeting, Downtown Public Library, 107 NE Monroe, Peoria.**

**Thursday, June 15th, 9:30 a.m. Environmental Issues Group, Panera's, 1101 W. Bird Blvd., off Knoxville, Peoria.**

**Wednesday, June 21, 5:30 pm. Drinks & Dialogue, Single Payer Healthcare, Lariat Steakhouse, 2232 W. Glen, Peoria.**

**June 9 – 11, LWVIL Convention, Hilton Garden Inn, Chicago O'Hare Airport, 2930 South River Road, DesPlaines, IL**

**Wednesday, July 19, 5:30 pm, Summer Renewal Social, The Peoria Women's Club, 301 NE Madison, Peoria.**