

The League of Women Voters of Greater Peoria

# THE VOTER

Volume 71, Issue 1

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## **IMPORTANT DATES**

**Saturday, Jan. 13, 9 - 11 am, Planning Meeting, AFT office 733 SW Washington, Peoria.**

Voter Service and Environmental Committee meetings  
*Continued on back page.*

## **PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**

**January 13<sup>th</sup> LWVGP Planning Breakfast  
Time: 9:00-9:30 AM Breakfast 9:30-11:00 AM  
Location: Illinois Federation of Teachers Office,  
733 SW Washington, Peoria**

Dear League Members,

Join your fellow local League members to make program recommendations and to share how to continue The Campaign for Making Democracy Work program. Working on this program will include addressing voting rights, improving elections, redistricting, and campaign finance/money in politics. This planning process maximizes the impact of League resources as we face multiple problems challenging our democracy. Our League will offer input on the national League program, the education and advocacy platform to move our mission forward.

On Saturday morning, January 13, 2018, you are invited to participate in this amazing process by attending the LWVGP Planning Breakfast. At this meeting, we will work together through a guided process 1) to identify LWVUS positions that we choose to use in education and lobbying efforts and 2) to talk about how we will continue to support the Campaign for Making Democracy Work. A report on our planning results will be sent to the LWVUS by March 1<sup>st</sup> for use in the development of the program plan. For more information on the League positions and issues we will address, go to [www.lwv.org](http://www.lwv.org).

***Join your fellow League members on January 13<sup>th</sup> to impact the 2018-2020 League program!!!***

**Reminder!!!** Learn and share how you can be "a part of the solution" every day by checking us out on Face Book and on our website at [www.lwvgp.org](http://www.lwvgp.org) for information about our local activities and events!!!!

--Farrell Davies, President, LWV of Greater Peoria

## **Weigh in on These Important Timely Topics at January 13<sup>th</sup> Planning Breakfast!**

### **Abolish the Electoral College?**

Recently, our League was asked to consider whether to support adding a few sentences on our program planning response form that would ask the LWVUS to make its existing position on abolishing the electoral college an action focus for the 2018-2020 biennium. This action focus would fit nicely under the Making Democracy Work umbrella.

***Come to the January 13<sup>th</sup> Planning Breakfast to weigh in on this important topic!***

### **How Does Artificial Intelligence Impact Us?**

The LWVUS recognizes the importance of Artificial Intelligence (AI) on every aspect of our lives from medical to transportation to banking to national defense. Because of this pervasive influence, the LWVUS is asking Leagues across the nation to weigh in on the need for a study of AI. At this point, there are no LWVUS positions that address this technology.

Although this technology is not yet a full replacement for a person—it is rapidly advancing in that direction. The most serious problem is finding a way to control this technology.

Leaders in technology are seriously concerned about AI and the implications of this unchecked technology. As an organization that is on the leading edge of policies impacting citizens, the League feels that there is a need to conduct a study of AI that would educate League members and that would guide lobbying efforts that would benefit us all.

***Come to the January 13<sup>th</sup> Planning Breakfast to weigh in on this important topic!***

**NOTE: Here are selected resource suggestions from LWV of California on Artificial Intelligence:**

if you If anyone would like to explore some of the aspects of this technology, we suggest that you look at books that are recommended by Bill Gates on this subject. He recommends *The Master Algorithm* by Pedro Domingo and *Superintelligence* by Nick Bostrom.

There is also a video of Nick Bostrom “Talks at Google” in 2014—the year his book was published. It is a bit long but also insightful.

Elon Musk recommends *Life 3.0: Being Human in the Age of Artificial Intelligence* by Max Tegmark, an MIT Professor. There are also numerous articles that one can find at the magazine rack and in the news. One very recent article covers Steven Hawking’s AI speech on the Dangers of AI at opening night of the WebSummit Conference on November 6, 2017.

## **Peoria County Referendum on March Ballot.**

### **Does our League support, oppose, or provide education only on the referendum?**

"Shall the elected Office of the Peoria County auditor be eliminated, effective December 1, 2018, and replaced with a professional County Auditor qualified and appointed by the County Board with a 5-year term during which such appointed County Auditor can only be removed from office for malfeasance or official misconduct? 'yes' or 'no' "

Our League's committee members are Gary Stella, Terry Matthews, and Cheryl Budzinski. We will meet on **Thursday Jan 4, 11, and 18 at 10:30 am** at the main library, downtown Peoria, in the Monroe Room on the second floor, 107 NE Monroe, Peoria. Please join us. We anticipate that Tazewell County may have a referendum on the November 2018 ballot.

We will have guidance from the LWVIL position on "Consolidation of Governmental Units & Sharing of Major Governmental Services," recent information from the Peoria County Board agenda packet, and the 2012 "Pass Forward Report to the Peoria County Board" as well as encouraging those with knowledge about the office to attend the January 11 meeting.

The County Auditor position is not constitutionally required office. Of the 102 counties in Illinois, twenty meet the population requirement to have the elected position. Of those, three do not have elected County Auditors. Join us. If that date/time does not work with your schedule, we would still appreciate hearing your feedback.

-- Cheryl Budzinaki

### **Possible Operations Model of Publicly Owned Water Utility**

Please join us on **Thursday, January 18** at 6 pm for another in a series of public education meetings hosted by our League regarding possible purchase of the water utility.

A question from our public meetings is: How would the city run a water distribution system? One model is for the city to own the system and hire a company to run the system.

Our speaker on January 18 represents a corporation which operates publicly owned utilities for municipalities. He will explain the ways this relationship is commonly setup and answer questions.

This is one in a series of public education meetings hosted by the League of Women Voters of Greater Peoria.

**LWVGP's position supports the City of Peoria moving forward on Due Diligence toward possible purchase of the water utility.**

6 pm on Thursday January 18, Thursday  
Advanced Medical Transport (AMT) auditorium, 1718 N. Sterling, Peoria.

The event is free and the public is invited.

– Cheryl Budzinski

Peoria City/County Landfill Committee Observer Report - no report as the Committee did not meet in December. The next meeting is Wednesday, Jan. 16th, 3 p.m. at the Peoria City Hall, fourth
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### **DRINKS AND DIALOGUE on JANUARY 17**

Loss of biodiversity and degrading ecosystem health have significant negative effects on human health. On a local scale – sustainable crops, disease management, and natural disaster buffers are compromised when faced with ecological challenges in our natural areas (e.g., invasive species, lack of oak regeneration due to fire suppression, and increased erosion due to urban storm water runoff).

Join the League of Women Voters on Wednesday, January 17, 2018 at 5:30 pm at the Lariat Steakhouse, 2232 W. Glen Ave, Peoria, for a community discussion with Mike Miller, supervisor of environmental and interpretive services for the Peoria Park District.

Learn what is being done locally to address these issues, and ways that Peoria area citizens can become involved in the solutions through volunteering, advocacy and making your home/neighborhoods more ecologically sustainable.

Thanks to Molly Schumacher for coordinating this event. Social time at 5:00 pm. Food and beverages available for purchase. Free and open to the public. Bring friends.

### **VOTER SERVICE COMMITTEE REPORT**

**The numbers are in** saying National Voter Registration Day was a huge success. Over 9,600 volunteers gathered 124,290 new or updated voter registrations. They far exceed the goal of 2,000 volunteers and 73,000 registrations.

You will recall we had 22 volunteers registering 231 people at the large Naturalization ceremony in September. Thank you to all who helped with our event.

We are planning to conduct four forums in February with two in Peoria for Congressional District 17 and 18; and two in Tazewell County. We are looking for workers to help with these. If you have a passion for any of these races, please offer to help. Call me! -- Mary Jane Crowell, **309-674-5313**. [crowellm@mtco.com](mailto:crowellm@mtco.com)

### **Nonpartisan Elections on the Ballot in Washington**

Our League hosted a candidate forum in Washington last February. The question of changing Washington's city elections to be nonpartisan was raised. Each mayoral and all aldermen candidates expressed support for such a change.

*Note: For decades, there has not been a Democrat on the ballot. Therefore, Democrat voters had no voice in primary elections and many did not vote.*

This fall several citizens tried repeatedly and unsuccessfully to get one of the nine Republicans to put the issue of nonpartisan elections on the Washington City Council agenda.

Lili Stevens formed a 20-member task force, wrote a petition, hired an attorney, and walked the community. In ten days they obtained 698 signatures, 280 more than the 418 required to put the election question on the March 20 ballot. Lili and her team's effort was bolstered by the candidates' statements of support for nonpartisan elections at the live-streamed LWV February candidate forum.

If Washington chooses nonpartisan elections, it is hoped more citizens will become candidates and even more citizens will vote. Cheers to our League. Kudos to Lili Stevens—one woman made democracy work in Washington, Illinois!

-- Terry Matthews, Washington Candidate Forum Coordinator

**OBSERVER REPORT: Peoria County Board of Election Commissioners, December 12, 2017**

With all members in attendance, the meeting went smoothly. The Election Commission is still overpaying on the water bill at Brandywine. The County, as leaseholder, is supposed to take care of changing this, but Mr. O'Connor has not yet met with the landlord. Director Tom Bride will bring this up to the County Administrator when he meets with him soon. The new Election Commission website should be up and running by Friday, December 15. It is using the same platform as Peoria County.

Three Peoria polling places might be changing. Northwoods Community Church no longer wishes to be a polling place. Unless they change their minds, Precinct 92 will vote at the North Branch Library, and Precincts 91 and 94 will move to Prayerview Church on Wilhelm Rd.

Candidate filing for local primary races went smoothly without any objections. Software for the poll books is being upgraded. And the State's Attorney's office is working on tax exemption for the Brandywine property.

Chairman Cummins expressed concern about the LWV website review which downgraded the Election Commission site because it was difficult to find the dates of meetings. Director Bride explained that the new website should be more user friendly.

-- Irene Pritzker

**Environmental Issues Committee**

Environmental Issues Meets Wednesday, Jan. 10 at 9:30 a.m. at Panera's off of Sterling. If you have an environmental interest please join the conversation! We are currently reviewing pollution concerns with coal tar sealants. Get your favorite Panera treat and a cup of brew and look for the LWV table for an interesting morning. Call Joyce Blumenshine for more information 309-688-0950.

**OBSERVER REPORT: DUNLAP SCHOOL DISTRICT -  
EIGHT MEETINGS in 5 WEEKS**

Hello, my name is Laura Turner and I am a member of the LWVGP. I have started to do observing of the Dunlap School District School Board Meetings. I became interested in observing after I learned that there were some large changes taking place in the district, as I am a parent, stakeholder, and work in one of the district schools. There were several meetings over the last few weeks that have taken place which have given some solutions/answers to questions. However, there are still many unresolved issues as well. I will do my best to highlight the main points of each of these meetings in this report.

The initial meeting which took place on **11/15/2017** was a standard meeting where there was discussion about college credit offering at the high school level and discussion about the athletics department. The main area of focus was on the point of one board member requested there be an investigation in the RFP bids by legal counsel. There was discussion about why there was not transparency in the process and whether there was some conflict of interest involved regarding the board members. There was also a call for action to have all board members document when they disagree with those paid expert's recommendations instead of just going against what they have recommended. This action was questioned and was never resolved at this meeting. It was pushed off to another time. Regarding the board members there was a definite sense of tension amongst them.

On **11/21/2017** there was a special board meeting. This meeting had to be moved as the crowd was underestimated so the meeting had to be adjourned and moved to a larger location. This meeting started out with many stakeholders, teachers and previous students speaking out against the board's

actions in previous and current board meeting agenda items. The stakeholders were very clear on their displeasure with the decisions that the board was making and the actions and behavior of the board as well. The board then went into closed session where they agreed on a mutual separation agreement that would take effect on December 31, 2017. There was then a vote to approve the motion, this motion was approved on a divided board with a 3 to 4 vote. This meeting again showed a lot of tension regarding the board as well as the public and the board. However, the public and the board were respectful of one another. It was again mentioned that there needed to be less personal agenda items involved in the board.

On **11/28/2017** there was another meeting in which had a very large public showing as well and the meeting again had to be moved to another location because of a large showing of public support and speakers. The meeting started out about the expansion of the middle schools due to the large population growth. There was a lot of discussion about what other options were available to solve the problem of the overcrowding without spending so much.

The fact that the **meeting agenda was changed at the last minute and that the board was not notified but that the information was shared on personal social media was an explosive topic which in turn had the board/superintendent secretary and many the public to walk out of the meeting.**

The board also covered the process of how an interim superintendent was going to be hired. There was a large amount of tension in the board this evening. The board did decide that they would get ISBE to come out and help determine what could be done to get an interim superintendent. It was agreed that that would be the best option with the most unbiased approach to the recruitment of both an interim and permanent superintendent.

On **12/2/2017**, there was another special board meeting held where another large number of stakeholders came to again voice their opinions against the termination of Dr. Parker and the behavior of the board itself. Then there was a presentation by the ISBE to discuss the different options for how they could help with the search and hiring of an interim and permanent superintendent. It went over its recommendations as well as the cost of these options. The board asked questions and decided to have the ISBE help in the hiring. An interim is paid between \$550-\$750 per day plus the potential for housing or transportation expenses as well.

The ISBE recommended surveys for stakeholders, parents, students, teachers, etc. to give their ideas for what they want to see in a superintendent, to take and then interview those who fit these surveys. It was also recommended that there would be a group of individuals who were stakeholders to come and be a part of the interview process. The board decided to go with the ISBE to help with the search. The ISBE representative stressed that a nonfunctioning or ill functioning board will impact whether the individuals want to work for the district.

On **12/11/2017** at another special board meeting the ISBE was again the speaker to discuss the details of the search and the specifics of what would happen in the coming days regarding the search. The results were talked about from the survey on what was desired of an interim superintendent. A 7-0 vote on the hiring and involving stakeholders, and rebuilding trust were some of the biggest points that were highlighted. It was made known that no internal applicants applied to take the interim position.

At this meeting it was also announced that the assistant superintendent was also resigning from the district. Discussion indicated that the position could be filled by this process as well. It was again discussed how there needed to be better transparency in the board. The tension within the board continued.

On **12/13/2017** there was a regular board meeting, and members of each school in the district stood up and spoke about the qualities of the individuals that would be hired. They focused on the qualities of Dr. Parker that were positive for the district.

There was discussion about the increase of the activities fee for the next school year from \$100 to \$125 and there was some question as to whether it was necessary to increase it that much and that it may affect some students who would not be able to participate in the activities. The reasoning for raising the fees is that the coaches need the additional monies to purchase equipment and uniforms.

There was also discussion about the middle school expansion on the agenda for the January meeting. The RFP was also discussed again this meeting. There was again discussion about the

investment of the money that is in savings, and hiring a financial advisor,

The assistant superintendent spoke about where the monies of the school are located and the investments. It was made known that the treasury report contained all the information as to where all the funds are located.

There was discussion about who the treasurer would be and an appointment would take place on 12/20/2017 during the special board meeting.

There was a discussion about attorney emails that are a concern because of recommendations that have never seen before. There was also discussion that the board went against the recommendations of the legal counsel.

On **12/16/2017** there was another special board meeting where there were interviews of the potential candidates for the interim positions. I was unable to attend this meeting however due to prior engagement and minutes were not posted on the district website.

On **12/20/2017** the last special board meeting of the year was held. At this meeting, it was announced who would be the new interim superintendent and assistant superintendent. They will both start work at the beginning of the year.

The last month was very telling for many individuals in the community about some very important points in the district and its board. There are still many unresolved issues that need to be handled. The most important issue of hiring of interims for both recently vacant positions has been handled, but there are some actions that have been brought out in the open that need to be cleared up and some actions that now can be handled in the next few meetings.

## Membership Report!

The League of Women Voters of Greater Peoria continues to grow. A few members from last year have not renewed – hopefully, they will still do so. We have 36 of our 119 members who have joined at the Defender of Democracy level which gives the League funds to do some of the work which has to be done. The list is below.

It is not too late to invite friends to join. New members will pay full dues, but next year's dues will be pro rated accordingly. Questions should be directed to Jan Deissler – [jdeissler@sbcglobal.net](mailto:jdeissler@sbcglobal.net). Perhaps you have a friend who has not re-joined for this year – encourage her/him to do so. There is much work to do. Once again the **Form for submitting dues** follows, next page.

## Defenders of Democracy

### Susan B. Anthony

Bettsey Barhorst  
Joyce Blumenshine and David Trachtenberg  
Ron and Cheryl Budzinski  
Katherine Coyle  
Farrell Davies  
Jan and Emil Deissler  
Rick and Tracy Fox  
Jeanette Gruber  
Joyce Harant  
Mary and Al Harkrader  
Carol and Al Hedeman  
Raymond Keithley  
Judge Michael McCuskey  
Terry and Larry Matthews

Linda and Gary Millen  
Steve Sonnemaker  
Irene Pritzker  
Connie Torrey-Romanus  
Kathie Raiborn  
Sid Ruckreigel  
Nancy Schweitzer  
Carolyn Shepherd  
Sandra Stemler  
Gale Thetford  
Jo Ann & Jim Thomas  
Lisa Uphoff  
Rob Parks

### Carrie Chapman Catt

Elliott Murray

### 2017/18 League of Women Voters of Greater Peoria Membership Form

Please select and circle your desired membership category and fill out the following:

- Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Mailing address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Primary phone (s) & email address(es) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Make check payable to LWVGP for the circled membership amount, and another check for the DD amount and mail this form and check(s) to LWVGP, P. O. Box 9786, Peoria, IL 61612-9786

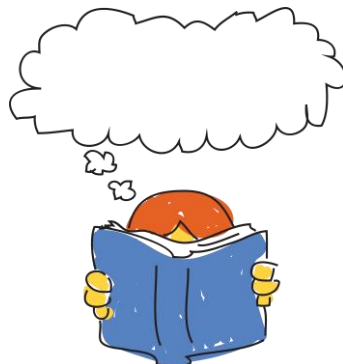
Category	Individual	Household
Regular	\$62	\$93
Student/ Young Professional/Scholarship	\$31	n/a
Defenders of Democracy		
• Susan B. Anthony	\$100	\$150
• Carrie Chapman Catt	\$200	\$300
• Eleanor Roosevelt	\$300	\$450

*Membership categories:*

- *Household = 2 members living at the same address. Student = full-time student. Young Professional = member 30 or younger*
- *Scholarship = limited income, contact Membership Co-Chair Jan Deissler 309-635-1872*
- *Defenders of Democracy = increased level of support acknowledged in Voter.*  
*Thank you, your membership makes democracy work!*

--- Clip and mail -----

-- Jan Deissler, Membership Chair







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**

**Thursday, Jan. 4, 11, 18, 10:30 am, meetings on County Auditor Referendum , Peoria Public Library downtown, Monroe Room, 107 NE Monroe, Peoria.**

**Saturday, Jan. 13, 2018, 9 am, General Meeting, Planning, AFT Office 733 SW Washington, Peoria.**

**Thursday, Jan. 19, 9:30 am. Environmental Issues Committee, Panera at Westlake Shopping Center, off Sterling, Peoria.**

**Wednesday, Jan., 17, 5:30 pm. Drinks & Dialogue, Degraded Ecosystems, Lariat Steakhouse, 2232 W. Glen, Peoria.**

**Thursday, Jan. 18, 6 pm. Operations Model for Publicly Owned Water Utility, AMT Auditorium, 1718 N. Sterling, Peoria.**

**February 8, 2018. Early voting begins in the Election Commission Office, 542 SW Adams, Peoria, IL 61602**

**February 21, 2018. Grace period registration and voting begins.**

**March 20, 2018. General Primary Election.**

**June 28 – July 1. National LWV Convention in Chicago, IL**