



The League of Women Voters of Greater Peoria

THE VOTER

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Board of Directors 2018-19

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Important Dates

- o **Noon-1 p.m. August 13,** LWVGP board meeting, Peoria Public Library Downtown.
- o **6 p.m. Aug. 14,** TBA: Peoria City Council may discuss due diligence on water.
- o **5-6:30 p.m. Aug. 15,** Drinks & Dialogue, Lariat Steakhouse, 2232 W. Glen.

President's Message

MOVING IS A STRUGGLE

I spent the last week moving from Dunlap to Peoria. There was the usual packing, unpacking, cleaning, sorting, notifying, and rearranging that goes with moving. My move was motivated by normal and predictable changes in my life journey and the life journeys of my family. Even though these changes are part of the normal life journey, the moving is a struggle.

Reflecting on what to share with you about the League of Women Voters of the United States Convention, I decided the most important “take away” is the fact the LWVUS is also in the process of “moving.” If it is to thrive, the League is moving from a 100-year history of focusing on the “tried and true” elements of mission work, nonpartisanship and membership, to a (hopefully) 100-year future that must also focus on elements of diversity, inclusion and equity. Even though the LWVUS acknowledges these changes are part of the normal organizational journey, the moving is a struggle.

Planning my move to Peoria meant including professionals, family members, and friends with diverse skills and resources in order to gather together everything I needed. Each and every one made a critical contribution to make my move work!

Planning for the League’s move into the next 100 years means including people with diverse backgrounds, experiences, demographics, and perspectives in order to gather together everything needed. Each and every one will be critical to make the move work!

Planning for our local League’s move into the next 100 years must also intentionally include the key elements of diversity, inclusion, and equity if we are to thrive. These elements are critically linked to our struggle to move to Make Democracy Work!

I ask you each to personally consider how the League of Women Voters of Greater Peoria can move into the next 100 years by more intentionally focusing on diversity, inclusion, and equity. The participation of each and every League member in this process of moving forward will make the struggle worthwhile and successful! Let the moving begin . . .

Looking forward to moving with you into the next 100 years,

— Farrell Davies, President

DRINKS & DIALOGUE, Wednesday, Aug. 15

Thomas Bride, Executive Director of the Peoria County Election Commission, will lead discussion on voter rights and the security of the voting system at 5:30 p.m. Wednesday, Aug. 15, at the Lariat Steakhouse, 2232 W. Glen Avenue, Peoria.

The mission of the Election Commission is to conduct accurate, secure, fair, and accessible local, state and federal elections with the highest level of professionalism and integrity in a manner that fosters public trust and confidence in the democratic process.

As we look toward federal, state and local elections in November, this is an opportunity to understand cybersecurity integrity and future innovations to enhance local election systems.

The League of Women Voters of Greater Peoria offers Drinks & Dialogue on the third Wednesday of the month at a local restaurant. Starting promptly at 5:30 p.m. and ending promptly at 6:30 p.m, we discuss local, state and national topics relating to approved LWV positions, aimed at “Making Democracy Work.”

The event is free and the public is invited. Refreshments are available for purchase. Social time is 5 to 5:30 p.m. Bring a friend and join us!

The League is a non-partisan issues-oriented, all-volunteer, member-directed organization committed to open, responsive and effective government brought about by informed, involved citizens with membership open to both men and women in Peoria, Tazewell, and Woodford counties. For more information, go to www.lwvgrp.org

— Connie Romanus

NOTES from the League of Women Voters National Convention, Chicago, 2018

Joyce Blumenshine and I made two presentations to Leaguers about the Land and Water Conservation Fund, a federal fund from taxes on off-shore drilling that is the major fund for purchasing land. Most major national parks and state and local parks in the U.S. have been acquired using LWCF money.

The fund is in jeopardy, as it has been slashed by the Trump administration. A bipartisan group of Congress members is working to save it, according to the major advocacy website, <https://www.lwcf-coalition.com/press-releases/>

The fund was used to purchase Riverfront Park in Peoria. What has happened there is a case study of weaknesses in the fund, whose rules to preserve these lands need to be strengthened both on the national and state levels.

We presented an in-depth look at these issues at a caucus at the League convention. Joyce B. created a power point presentation for it. Riverfront Park was purchased due to the efforts of our League’s former member Dorothy Sinclair, who became a Peoria City Council member. There’s a small monument to her in the park.

We also presented a brief presentation on the park and two other water issues in Peoria for the Upper Mississippi River Region Inter League Organization. Our League is a member of this group. There we talked about the city’s interest in purchasing the water company and the sewer overflow issue, as well as the LWCF issues.

— Elaine Hopkins

MEMBERSHIP REPORT, August

The Membership Social at Springdale Cemetery has been deemed a success. The weather was perfect, the food delicious, the drinks satisfying and the program on target. Many renewal memberships were received. The Membership Committee will now do one more personal e-mail and then we will follow with phone calls. Members are encouraged to renew their memberships as soon as possible to assist the Membership Committee so they can focus on new members. Thanks to all who have renewed.

General Meetings will begin again in September at the AMT Building on Nebraska Avenue. Drinks & Dialogue continues in August at The Lariat Club on Glen Avenue. It is hoped that members will attend and bring friends to these meetings. Remember, our best recruitment is done by our members. Check the website for updated information. Thanks to all who have renewed.

If you have questions, please contact one of us:

Linda Millen – 645-2542
Tchkids2@sbcglobal.net

Jan Deissler – 635-1872
jdeissler@sbcglobal.net

Defenders of Democracy

A number of our members have joined at the “Defenders of Democracy” levels:

Carrie Chapman Catt

Cheryl & Ron Budzinski

Susan B. Anthony

Bettsey Barhorst

Katherine Coyle

Farrell Davies

Jill & Pedro De Alarcon

Jan & Emil Deissler

Rick & Tracy Fox

Mary & Al Harkrader

Sherry Hillman

Raymond Keithley

Ted Mathews & Sharon Maule

Terry & Larry Matthews

Roberta Parks

Irene Pritzker

Connie Romanus

Carolyn Shepherd

Steve Sonnemaker

Sandra Stemler

Gary & Linda Miller

— Jan Deissler

PEORIA COUNTY ELECTION COMMISSION, Tuesday, July 10

The Election Commission held its monthly meeting on July 10, with Commissioner LaColis Reed absent.

During the discussion of the payment of bills, it was noted that Peoria County had not yet filed for a tax exemption for the part of the Brandywine building that will be housing the Election Commission. Since the Commission will be using 55 percent of the building, that percentage of real estate taxes should not need to be paid. Those taxes that the Commission has already paid should be reimbursed. However, the County, which leases the building, has not yet filed the tax exemption.

A new polling place for precincts 54, 55, and 79 in Peoria has been found. It will move from the United Presbyterian Church on Northmoor Road to the Teamsters Union Hall on Allen Road. This location is next door to another polling place at the Woodland Baptist Church.

In his report, Executive Director Tom Bride said he is preparing next year's budget for presentation to the Peoria County Board. There will be a new phone cost for the Brandywine location, but otherwise costs will be close to this year. Almost all of the drywall at that location is finished, as is the interior HVAC. The buildout seems to be on pace for the Commission to move at the beginning of September. They are looking at outdoor signage, and CityLink will provide a bench for the nearby bus stop.

Staff has started looking at replacement software to be used after the November election. They will evaluate programs and make a recommendation to the board.

Lastly, Bride is still working on a downtown early voting location. Three possibilities include a city building (the current location), the library, or a downtown church. ICC North will not be used for early voting because of its proximity to the Brandywine location.

The July Board meeting was the last for Commissioner Camille Gibson. The August meeting will be the annual meeting when new commissioners will be seated.

— Irene Pritzker

SPRINGDALE CEMETERY MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY, July 17

Chairman Steve Kerr, Jim Stuttle, Bob Manning, Becky Doubleday, and Pat Powers were in attendance. Kerr has been working on the Scattering Garden project and showed the plan (in progress.)

Manager Mark Matusak was not at the meeting.

Mike Rucker, volunteer coordinator with Peoria Wilds reported on the Savannah and the "Woodlands." (The Savannah is native plants. The Woodlands is not native plants, but deer resistant and needing little maintenance.) Mike had 20 volunteers working on The Woodlands recently — there were a lot of tree-killing vines.

August 7 black-topping will begin in certain areas. The number of burials and sales was discussed and was good. Heritage company — established in 1820 in Peoria- has been doing "wonderful" restoration work at the cemetery for the Springdale Foundation.

Steve with "Find a Grave" has six volunteers helping with Springdale, including photographing graves. About 59,000 have been identified, with 70 percent photographed. Monica and Jim are very impressed with his work. Jim said that genealogy is the second biggest hobby in the United States.

Observer Cheryl Budzinski thanked the Board for allowing the LWV to hold its Summer Social at Springdale near the stones of "The Shaft." (Cheryl is filling in for Rick Fox.)

— Cheryl Budzinski

PEORIA HOUSING AUTHORITY BOARD of COMMISSIONERS MEETING, June 28

Peoria Housing Authority Board Chairman James Fassino opened the regular monthly meeting at 4:30 p.m. Thursday, June 28, at Frank Campbell Community Center, 312 S. Merriman.

All commissioners were present, with the exception of Doug Draeger. Fassino said Draeger had submitted his resignation due to potential conflicts of interest. Ms. Jackie Neuman, Executive Director of Springfield Housing Authority, was present. The minutes of the May 28 meeting were accepted.

PHA is working on Master Development Agreement for all PHA units to meet U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development requirements.

Security: Currently, nine units are “off line” — used for storage, resource and maintenance — as well as the Harrison substation. The maximum off-line units to meet HUD requirements would be 10. Security expense increased slightly due to activity at Harrison. Ms. Neuman discussed the need to plan for increase in security at specific locations that may be hot spots during May-September period and build in cost of cameras to capital budget. This has proved effective at Springfield locations.

Collections decreased 7 percent from prior month. Review of data identified seasonal drop in residents at Harrison. Plan to focus on collections next two months. Occupancy budgeted at 90 percent; actual is 88.9 percent. Unplanned expense of inspector contract identified. Highlights of the budget meeting held earlier in the day were reviewed. Currently revenue is ahead of budget, housing choice voucher reserves, planning 2019 budget, developing detailed reports for commissioners. Current wait list is 22. Forty-one vouchers were used, with 25 to 30 more available at the end of July. Reviewed agreement for residents behind in rent, as well as changes in income as they affect rent. Audit recently completed with three findings for response; waiting on written findings. Anticipate housing voucher program finding; no loss in funding. Improvement in HCV program.

Human Resources: Interviews are scheduled for current openings; they're preparing offers based on interviews. Overtime increased due to staffing vacancy.

Publicity: Discussed using Facebook and press releases to highlight positive events.

A resolution to amend admissions and continued occupancy no smoking policy was thoroughly discussed and approved. Residents were notified no smoking would be allowed within 25 feet of PHA property in May by flyers and postings at each site, as well as newsletter and general meetings. In addition, each resident will sign off on policy in July with lease renewals. Residents are able to attend cessation classes for smoking. This policy will bring PHA sites in compliance with HUD policies. Residents will be given up to five violations of policy before lease terminated.

The meeting ended at 5:30 p.m., when board members moved into executive session.

— Connie Romanus

PEORIA HOUSING AUTHORITY BOARD of COMMISSIONERS MEETING, July 28

The meeting time is new and they didn't have a quorum at 3 p.m. Vice Chair Carl Cannon started the meeting with discussion items not needing a vote. Another commissioner arrived about 3:20, creating a quorum. (The Board has one opening since a commissioner resigned at the last meeting.) Carl Cannon, Anne Fox, Alma Brown, and Tekia Childs were in attendance. The Executive Director was not at the meeting.

One item of concern was the painting contractor giving notice that they would not be able to paint approximately 40 units by a specific deadline in August. But the contracted company was the only company submitting a bid. A decision on whether to put the painting out for bid again will be made by Tuesday. Commissioners asked sincere questions to support staff's efforts.

An anticipated report on resident security and safety will be presented at the October meeting.

After the meeting was adjourned, Observer Cheryl Budzinski asked the Board to post the full board packet on their website with the meeting agenda. They don't have the full packet available at the meeting either. The commissioners seemed to agree and asked the board's clerk to see if that is possible. (She said they used to post the entire packet.) Only the Observer and Steve Tarter, Peoria Journal Star were in the audience. The meeting ended at 5:30 p.m., when board members moved into executive session.

— Cheryl Budzinski, (temporary)

HELP THE ENVIRONMENT

Environmental Issues small group meetings will resume in September on the second Wednesday at 10 a.m. at the Panera Restaurant off of Sterling. If you have suggestions for any parking lots you would like to recommend for the citizen screening to find out if it is coal-tar based or asphalt, please email Joyce Blumenshine at joblumen@yahoo.com. We will be doing testing over the summer and compiling a list.

– Joyce Blumenshine

WELCOME NEW BOARD DIRECTOR

We want to welcome the following new Board Director approved by the LWVGP Board on July 9, 2018 to serve during the 2018-2019 term: **Kathie Raiborn**



League of Women Voters
of Greater Peoria

623 W. Stratford, Peoria, IL 61614

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

ON THE WEB:

www.lwvgp.org

IMPORTANT DATES

- Aug. 13 Noon-1 p.m., LWVGP Board Meeting, Peoria Downtown Library Conference Room A**
- Aug. 14 6 p.m., Peoria City Council may discuss water due diligence. Stay tuned!**
- Aug. 15 Drinks & Dialogue, 5:00-6:30 PM, Lariat Steakhouse**