



Volume 73 Issue 7

July 2020

President's Message

It's time to act

Amidst the chaos of 2020, here's how we can celebrate the Fourth of July and the founding of the United States:

Take inventory of our values and beliefs. Then take action to ensure the liberties and protections guaranteed in the Constitution and its Amendments are available to all Americans regardless of race or religion.

Unfortunately, racial injustices to people of color are not uncommon. The death of George Floyd is a call to action. Black and white protestors across the country have come together in solidarity, calling for systemic changes that are long overdue. This is an opportunity we cannot ignore!

How will you fight discrimination?

If you are white, I suggest you get to know the persons of color you interact with. Read the history you were not taught in school. Learn to recognize and understand your own privilege. Examine your own biases and consider where they may have originated. Validate the experience and feelings of people of color. Call out racist comments and jokes. Challenge colorblind ideology. Find out how your company or school works to expand opportunities for people of color. Adopt an intersectional approach in all aspects of your life. For more detail on these steps, go to the following article: https://nnedv.org/latest_update/8-everyday-ways-to-fight-racism/

If you are a person of color, I ask you to get more involved with the LWVGP. During our first century, which is just ending, our membership has been predominantly older white women. As we begin our second century this summer, we want to grow and become as diverse as the country we serve. Be a part of the change!

———— Constance Romanus, LWVGP President

IMPORTANT DATES:

12:30 p.m. Monday, July 13, LWVGP Board Meeting, via Zoom.

Wednesday, July 15. Summer Social at Cheryl & Ron Budzinski home. See invitation!

GET READY TO VOTE NOW

With the uncertain status of the COVID-19 pandemic this fall, Illinois residents will have a variety of options to cast votes. While early voting and polling locations on Election Day will be available, voters also can complete an application to vote by mail in the Tri-County area.

A review of the Tri-County election commission websites shows links to go online and indicate if you want to receive a ballot by mail for the Nov. 3, 2020 election. I encourage voters to be proactive and complete the application now instead of waiting for your Election Commission to send the application by mail. Why not save our election officials and staff time and perhaps a little money in postage!

Peoria County/City: <https://www.peoriaelections.org/205/Vote-by-Mail-Online-Request>

Tazewell County: <https://il-tazewell.ballotrequest.net/>

Woodford County only has downloadable application for ballot at: <http://www.woodford-county.org/DocumentCenter/View/1580/Vote-by-Mail-Application-print--mail> OR Woodford County Clerk/Elections lists the State of Illinois' online application at: <https://ova.elections.il.gov/Step0.aspx>

———— Connie Romanus

MORE ON VOTER SERVICES

The General Assembly passed — and Governor Pritzker signed — legislation designed to increase the use of vote-by-mail for the November 2020 election due to the ongoing presence in our country and state of the Coronavirus. This legislation ONLY applies to the November 2020 election.

Local election officials will automatically send an application for a vote-by-mail ballot to the following categories of people:

- Voted in the past two years
- Voted in the 2018 general election
- Voted in the 2019 consolidated election
- Voted in the 2020 primary election
- Registered to vote after the 2020 primary

If you do not fall into those categories or you don't want to wait for an application to be mailed, you can go online and request your ballot. The generic State of Illinois Vote By Mail agreement is available at: <https://elections.il.gov/ElectionOperations/VotingByMailAgreement.aspx>. As Connie mentioned, there are good reasons to go ahead now and ballot requests also are available from each of the Tri-Counties.

This legislation has great impact on the November 2020 election:

- Election Day is a holiday for local and state government employees as well as schools.
- Early voting locations are required to be open from 8:30 a.m. to 7 p.m. on weekdays and from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on the weekends and holidays.
- Curbside voting, in which voters can fill out the ballot outside of the polling place.
- Addition of a central voting site, where anyone who lives in the jurisdiction can vote.
- Optional early voting hours for people at greater risk of contracting COVID-19.

Here are some resources to help answer your election questions:

Unsure if you're registered to vote or don't know where your polling place is?

- Registration Lookup: <https://illinoisvoterguide.org/> or <https://ova.elections.il.gov/RegistrationLookup.aspx>

Need to register to vote?

- Register Online: <https://illinoisvoterguide.org/> or <https://ova.elections.il.gov/Step0.aspx>
- Print a Registration Form: <https://www.elections.il.gov/ElectionOperations/VotingRegistrationForms.aspx>

Need other information regarding voting?

- Illinois State Board of Elections: <https://elections.il.gov/Default.aspx>

—— compiled by Roberta Parks

UPDATES FROM LWVIL

Hope you enjoyed the new LWVIL member bulletin which you should have received June 18. If not, please email me at: cbudzinski@LWVIL.org This mailer is directed only at members and full of information.

You should have received a “LWVIL Needs Your Help” request on June 27. We need members interested in serving on committees — and three for one-year terms on the state board of directors. Again, contact me if you did not receive that email. We meet virtually at least through 2020 – no driving to Chicago at this time.

Look for a “Fair Tax” program in early fall. The League has long supported a Graduated Rate Income Tax, or GRIT. The proposed amendment to the Illinois Constitution to change from a flat tax to graduated “Fair Tax” is on the Nov. 3 ballot. Most states use a graduated rate rather than flat rate income tax.

—— Cheryl Budzinski, Director

YOU CAN WATCH “THE VOTE” on PBS!

American Experience on PBS Channel 47 premieres “The Vote” at 8 p.m. Monday, July 6 and second part at 8 p.m. Tuesday July 7 about suffrage.

—— Cheryl Budzinski

BREAKING NEWS FROM LWVUS 2020 CONVENTION:

Abolish the Electoral College

At the LWVUS national convention in late June, the LWV Deerfield/Lincolnshire and the LWV of Illinois Committee proposed a resolution to dump the outdated Electoral College:

“The 2020 Convention of the League of Women Voters of the United States urgently reaffirms its long-held position that the Electoral College should be abolished.”

However, the LWVUS Convention Committee felt this resolution violated the convention’s resolutions criteria, “must not circumvent the program planning process” and is not, as required, “consistent with current stated LWVUS positions.”

And the LWVIL committee, led by Rosemary Heilemann and presented by Joyce Williams, made a motion to adopt the “Abolishment of the Electoral College by constitutional amendment as a LWVUS action item.”

LWVIL presenters challenged the violation idea saying the convention resolution criteria is undemocratic, does not represent the will of the people, and has outlived its usefulness. Currently, League members are unable to lobby their legislators on this topic without approval from the LWVUS. A request by the LWVIL in 2019 to allow them to meet with legislators to discuss abolishing the Electoral College was denied. In a Presidential election, the Electoral College effectively ensures that individual votes do not count equally; instead, the number of state delegates to the Electoral College are based on the number of Congressional representatives in each state.

The National Popular Vote Interstate Compact will still proceed along with the electoral college abolition by constitutional amendment.

There was much debate, both pro and con on the resolution. The LWVIL Committee was successful in overturning the decision of the Convention Committee on this proposal. The proposal passed with 60% of the votes and will be added to the LWVUS Program for 2020-2022. This is a great achievement for the members of LWVUS and especially for those members of LWVIL who worked so hard!

Approximately 1,100 LWV members attended as delegates of the 2020 LWVUS Convention, which was held via Zoom June 25-27. (It was mentioned that they had 1,749 total registered delegates, but those using phones could not vote because of the cumbersome issue on Zoom . . . probably that explains the difference in numbers.). Interesting that delegates came from all 50 states, D.C., and Virgin Islands and covered seven time zones. Non-voting members attended on a different platform.

The newly-elected President of the LWVUS is Dr. Deborah Turner. She is the 20th President and an African American – only the second. Another cause for great celebration! Out of the eight LWVUS elected directors for 2020-2022, two are from Illinois . . . Sania Irwin and Lali Watt.

You can access the convention workbook by going to www.lwvus.org. Many of the presentations will be posted on the LWVUS Youtube site at the beginning of July.

—— Connie Romanus and Sandy Stemler

CAN YOU HELP CHANGE THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM?

After three years of work, the LWVIL Criminal Justice study committee has published study materials on the LWVIL.org website. Local Leagues have been asked to form their own teams to study and present the materials. Their task is to have a presentation so that local League members can become acquainted with the essential information. In January 2021, a consensus meeting will be held. Cheryl and Ron Budzinski will lead the local study group and hope to get started soon. Interested persons should contact president@lwvgp.org.

—— Connie Romanus

MEMBERSHIP REPORT: COME TO THE SOCIAL!

Finally this report can begin differently! We are entering Phase 4 of Reopening Illinois and celebrating in a big (well, not so big) way! The Membership Social is 5:30-7 p.m. Wed., July 15, at the home of Ron and Cheryl Budzinski, 346 High Point Road (off Mt. Hawley Road). The house is on your right as you approach.

Please use every precaution to be safe. We will be inside and outside the house – hoping mostly outside. Food will be prepackaged to ensure safety. Wear a face covering and/or stay socially distant when talking with others. Beverages will flow, as usual.

This is an opportunity to visit with friends and acquaintances and renew friendships. Connie will give a short overview of the League's happenings and the long-awaited Raffle Drawing will occur at 6 p.m. Tickets are still on sale at 309-635-1872. They are \$10 each; 3/\$25. Or you may purchase them on site.

Dues are coming in – we have three new members at this time. Congratulations and thank you to the following for joining at the higher levels:

Carrie Chapman Catt

Elliott Murray

Susan B. Anthony

Carolyn Close	Andrew Rand*
Jan & Emil Deissler	Sid Ruckriegel
Joan French	Connie Romanus
Mary & Alan Harkrader	Roberta Parks
Allan Hedeman*	Carolyn Shepherd*
Judge Michael McCuskey	Sandra Stemler
Just in: Joyce Harant	

*Indicates new or renewing after a period of time.

Providing nonpartisan information to voters is a must in a busy election year. Remember: You joined the League because someone asked you to join. So invite one friend or family member to join with you and the League to Make Democracy Work. Let's make 2020-2021 a year of growth for the League of Women Voters of Greater Peoria. If you have questions, contact either Jan or Linda.

Stay healthy! Stay tuned! Stay connected! (League year starts July 1.)

Jan Deissler

Linda Millen

Jandeissler77@gmail.com
309-635-1872

tchkids2@sbcglobal.net
309-645-2542

Dues Invoice

The League's Membership Year is July 2020 - June 30, 2021 2020/2021 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 mail this form and check to LWVGP, P.O. 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 or Linda Millen 309-635-2542*
- *Defenders of Democracy = increased level of support acknowledged in Voter.*

Thank you. Your membership makes democracy work!

PEORIA CITY COUNCIL, June 23

The meeting was almost four hours long. Many recent meetings have been that long or longer.

The **Township of Peoria's Annual Meeting** which had been postponed from April was held with little discussion. The major subject was not including the \$20,000 donation to Center for Prevention of Abuse. Instead, \$10,000 would be donated with another worthy nonprofit getting the other \$10,000. Because I have attended many township meetings, I know that the donation to the Center was to help women and their kids with housing. You see, the majority of money paid by the Township, besides overhead, is for single men who need housing. That is because the "rules" are that only people who receive NO other assistance from governmental units (VA, food assistance, etc.) can get the General Assistance support payments. And that used to go toward the men's rent, although the recent rule

changes allow payments to utilities, food, etc.

Peoria City Council Meeting: You are aware of the gaping hole in the city's budget and the two proposals the councilpersons are considering regarding staffing. Well more than one person also commented that they will be considering raising taxes since staffing changes will not completely fix the budget.

Council approved recommended appointments to 22 committees and commissions including seven members for the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Public Service Advisory Commission and eight appointments for the Advisory Committee on Police and Community Relations. (LWVGP past president Farrell Davies was reappointed to the CDBG committee.)

Short Term Rentals (STR) were discussed at length. The city had indicated it would require a "special use" permit to allow Vrbos, Airbnbs, etc. to operate in residential areas. Now staff is proposing (First Reading) 20-182 STRs be an allowed Commercial Use within all residentially zoned areas in the city subject to the properties paying hotel license, hotel tax, and comply with life safety codes. One question unanswered was if these are not allowed by restrictive covenants of a Homeowners Association, can they operate within that neighborhood? There are many STR's currently in operation in the city.

—— Cheryl Budzinski, Observer

PEORIA PARK DISTRICT, June 10

The meeting was held through streaming ZOOM on the Peoria Park District Facebook Page. The meeting was called to order at 6 p.m. by President Robert Johnson. Trustees Joseph Cassidy, Joyce Harant, Jackie Petty, Nancy Snowden, Mic Williams and Matt Ryan participated.

Trustees approved a one-year deferral for the Donovan Sculpture Garden. Trustees approved a Welcoming Ordinance that will be posted at District locations. The ordinance will broadly communicate that PPD is open and accessible to all residents.

Trustees were shown a new marketing approach for PPD during the pandemic. Titled "New Ways to Play" it will feature the various activity options of the district such as Peoria Park District Academy that will be located at Proctor and Lakeview Recreation Centers, Yoga in the Park, and mobile movies.

Guidance from the May 27 Trustees' meeting for addressing the budget challenges presented by COVID-19 included the following:

- o Equitable access to healthy and vibrant programming
- o Celebrate the value of parks and trails and advocate for the environment
- o Prioritize PPD unique amenities
- o Support health initiatives and base decisions on public health guidance.

Staff informed Trustees they project a \$2 million loss in 2020 if changes are not made. Based on this potential loss and guidance from the previous meeting, the Trustees were asked to consider the following three recommendations:

- o Short-term closure of the Franciscan Recreation Center, saving \$50,000.
- o Short-term closure of the Glen Oak Amphitheater, saving \$34,000.
- o Short-term closure of the Aquaplex, saving \$75,000.

Trustees and staff discussed the need to get public input and feedback on these three recommendations prior to the Trustees' June 24 meeting when budget decisions would be made. A variety of modes of collecting public feedback will be used, including a Zoom Town Hall meeting and commenting through ppd@peoria-parks.org.

During Citizens Comments, the removal of the statue of Christopher Columbus in Laura Bradley Park was raised. Trustees also reported receiving calls about this statue. It was agreed that Trustees would need to get more public input and feedback prior to making a decision about removing the statue. In addition, staff shared that there is a policy about adding items to PPD; however, there is no policy about removing items from PPD.

Trustees approved a change order for \$19,461 to address the poor to non-existent base of the West Peoria asphalt path near the Franciscan Recreation Center discovered during work on the trail.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:47 PM.

——— Farrell Davies

PEORIA PARK DISTRICT, June 24

The meeting was held through streaming ZOOM on the Peoria Park District Facebook Page. The meeting was called to order at 6 p.m. by President Robert Johnson. Trustees Joseph Cassidy, Joyce Harant, Jackie Petty, Nancy Snowden, Mic Williams and Matt Ryan participated.

Trustees were presented with the 2019 Audit Report by Katie Bermingham, CPA with CliftonLarsonAllen. The audit was clean with no findings. Trends in major areas such as tax revenue, operating expenses, and long-term debt were all good.

The Golf Ad Hoc Committee report indicated golf is doing very well, especially the Partner to Play program that has sold 276 passes to date.

The Trustees discussed the short-term closure of the Franciscan Recreation Center in West Peoria. Concerns about closing this site were expressed because West Peoria does not have any other recreation center. The Trustees were assured it could still serve as a polling place for voting and the outdoor area is still available. Trustees voted to approve the short-term closure of the center. Voting for the mo-

tion: Trustees Harant, Ryan, Snowden, and Williams. Voting against the motion: Trustees Cassidy, Petty, and Johnson.

The Trustees voted unanimously for short-term closure of the Glen Oak Amphitheater and the establishment of an Advisory Group for Glen Oak Park Reimagination.

Trustees discussed the short-term closure of the Aquaplex, including the public comments that focused primarily on the need for people to have access to the lap and therapy pools for health reasons. Trustees also discussed concerns about the impact on the PPD relationship with OSF if the lap and therapy pools remained open. Trustees approved the short-term closure of the Aquaplex with the exception of the therapy and lap pools. Voting for the motion: Trustees Cassidy, Harant, Johnson, Petty, Ryan, and Williams. Voting against the motion: Trustee Snowden. Notification to RiverPlex members will be sent out immediately. OSF will also be notified in order for them to inform their patients that used the Aquaplex.

Trustees unanimously approved a motion to begin the process of evaluating the removal of the Christopher Columbus Statue in Laura Bradley Park through public hearings in August or September.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:08 p.m.

——— Farrell Davies

PEORIA HOUSING AUTHORITY, May 4

The Board of Commissioners of the Peoria Housing Authority (PHA) Regular Meeting was held at 4:30 p.m. June 1, via Zoom due to Governor Pritzker's Executive Order 2020-07 regarding precautions due to the coronavirus pandemic. All Commissioners participated; Chairman Cannon presided.

There were no Community Comments. New employee, Holly Karl, Executive Assistant, was introduced. The minutes of the May 5, 2020 meeting were approved. Reports were approved by consent of the members, unanimously.

Jackie Newman, Chief Executive Officer, reported that while the PHA office continues to be closed to the public, the process of placing families into housing continues. Four hundred nineteen applications were processed in the past month, as well as 600 annual resident verifications completed. Improvements continue to be made at properties, including replacement of gutters and gutter guards at Harrison, hydro-flushing of hydrants and sewers, improvement of boiler at Harrison, and sidewalk repair/replacement. At Taft, families are being moved to central locations to facilitate caulking of windows due to water intrusion. Security camera installation at Sterling Towers are now complete. Twelve scattered units have had routine maintenance improvements. PHA staff anticipate a positive score on next audit and will continue ongoing maintenance of properties.

Finance Committee met earlier in the day and Treasurer Kadar Heffner reported no issues. Resolution to modify current contract with Point Services of \$63,500 was approved for complete renovation of 2411-B Starr St. due to vandal damage while vacant. Resolution approved to award professional legal services contract for evictions. Prior contract had expired; this was put out for bid.

Regular meeting was adjourned at 4:50 p.m. Commissioners then went into closed session.

—— Connie Romanus

PEORIA COUNTY ELECTION COMMISSION, June 16

The Peoria County Election Commission held its June meeting on Facebook Live. Two League members tried to follow it with mixed results. One was kicked off after about 10 minutes, and even after getting back on, had no sound—only closed captioning. The other could follow most of the meeting, with sound, but had glitches at various times. The Board is hoping to meet in person in July, assuming the State of Illinois is in Phase 4.

Director Tom Bride presented several budget amendments. They anticipated the County Board approving an increase of \$300,000, and the Governor signing Senate Bill 1863, which includes measures to expand vote-by-mail and early voting for the November general election. (Both things happened that afternoon.)

The office will need to mail over 68,000 vote-by-mail applications by August 1. It will need software for a second scanner, a process sorter that can scan return envelopes and verify signatures, a secure ballot box for returned ballots, printing and postage expenses for applications and ballots, and extra judges.

Savings will be found by reducing the number of early voting days at specific locations and some consolidation of polling places. Polling places located in senior living facilities will be moved to other locations that are already being used.

Director Bride is anticipating few problems with recruiting judges, since the new law will close schools on election day. This will allow teachers and students to be judges that day, taking the pressure off senior citizens who might not wish to spend the whole day with strangers.

The Commission's attorney reported that the court case concerning whether the Commission had to pay real estate taxes has been dismissed with prejudice, meaning that it is settled. The Commission will pay pro-rated taxes to the landlord, who will in turn pay the City and County. Even with taxes included, rent for the location is considered reasonable.

—— Chris Schmidt & Irene Pritzker



WHAT IS THE FAIR TAX AMENDMENT?

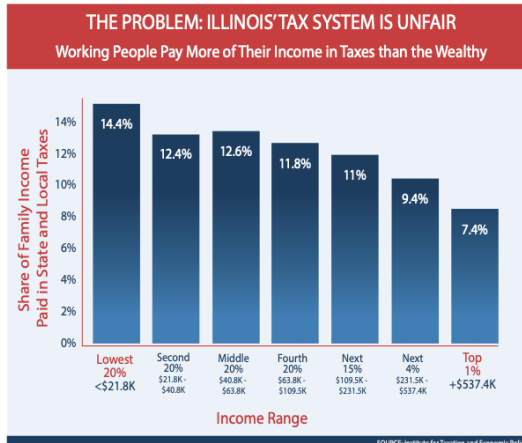
The Fair Tax amendment reforms the state constitution to eliminate the requirement that Illinois tax income at a single rate, allowing instead for **higher rates for higher incomes and lower rates for people with low and moderate incomes.**

WHY DO WE NEED FAIR TAX REFORM?

The old way of taxing income in Illinois is **unfair and inadequate.**

The old way is unfair because taxes fall too heavily on working people. Low-income households now pay almost double what the wealthiest pay in taxes as a share of their income. **That's wrong!**

The old way is inadequate because it doesn't properly fund public services. That causes budget deficits at every level of government, pushing up property taxes and forcing harmful cuts to education, human services, health care, infrastructure, public safety and jobs.



WHAT DOES THE FAIR TAX AMENDMENT MEAN FOR ME?

Fair Tax reform will **lift the burden from the middle class** and those struggling to get there: **97% of taxpayers will get a tax cut** or pay no more than they do now.

The Fair Tax will require wealthy people to pay their fair share, **only increasing taxes on those who make more than a \$250,000 a year.** The vast majority of the increases will be paid by millionaires and billionaires.

Fair Tax reform will raise more than \$3 billion a year that can help to **fund education, health care, human services, state and local government, and responsibly pay the state's bills.**

HOW DO WE WIN THE FAIR TAX FOR ILLINOIS?

We win the Fair Tax by **voting YES** on the constitutional amendment on the ballot for the November 2020 general election. A 'yes' vote of more than 50% of those voting in the election or more than 60% of those voting on the question is required for passage.

www.yesforfairtax.org



Paid for by Vote Yes for Fair Tax



The Fair Tax Explained in About a Minute

The Fair Tax would reform Illinois' broken tax system, ensuring that 97% of Illinoisans — those who make \$250,000 a year or less — receive a tax cut or pay nothing.



League of Women Voters
of Greater Peoria

413 W. Lawndale Ave., Peoria, IL 61604

ON THE WEB: www.lwvgp.org

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

IMPORTANT DATES:

12:30 p.m. Monday, July 13. LWVGP Board Meeting, via Zoom.

Wed., July 15. Summer Social at Cheryl & Ron Budzinski home, 346 High Point Rd.

**League of Women Voters of Greater Peoria Board of Directors
2020-2021**

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Kathie Raiborn, 2nd V-P
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