

President's Message

We remain nonpartisan

As the League of Women Voters US reminds us, issues are nonpartisan. Political environments may change, but no political party has claim on particular issues.

Over the years, we have been consistent in our positions, updating them as the landscape has evolved. The League began when women fought to have a voice. It has survived McCarthyism, the fight for ERA and more.

As we study issues, we ask: Is this good for the longevity of the League? Is it work that supports our mission to empower voters and focus on democracy?

The League "shall not support or oppose any political party or candidate." This is the cornerstone policy and strength of the organization. It must be carefully guarded. Our purpose is to promote political responsibility through informed and active participation in government and action on selected governmental issues.

It is easy to get caught up in finger-pointing. It is better to find common ground with each other as we move into our second 100 years!

We encourage all members, except Directors and those representing the League before the public, to actively work for candidates and the party of their choice. Take the opportunity: Become an observer of a governmental body. Participate in local legislative interviews. Get involved in local and state programs.

For example, the recent LWVIL Issues briefings covered the environment, housing, Illinois' budget (taxation), effects of systemic racism & inequality, welcoming/sanctuary cities and redistricting. If you missed these sessions, LWVIL will have recordings on lwvil.org.

Our condolences to Alan Harkrader and family on the death of Mary Harkrader on January 30. Alan and Mary have been long time members of the League. We also lost another long-time member, Joan Trenchard French, who passed away on February 14; our condolences to her family also.

With the LWVGP incorporated as a 501c3 entity, membership dues are tax deductible. If you need a letter stating this for your taxes, please email Terry Kohlbus, Treasurer, at www.terrykohlbus@sbcglobal.net.

———— Constance Romanus, LWVGP President

Important Dates:

12:30 p.m. Mon., March 8: LWVGP Board meeting, via Zoom.
Wed., March 24: “Tea for Three” virtual event. (Register at lwgvp.org).
Wed., April 21: Drinks & Dialogue returns!
Thurs., April 29: People Powered Day of Action — Redistricting.
6 p.m. Thurs., May 6: LWVGP Annual Meeting.
June 11-13: LWVIL Convention (virtual).

VOTER SERVICES

April 6, 2021 General Election

This election includes municipal offices such as Mayor or Village President, Council members, School Board members, etc. Early Voting for this election begins February 25 in the County Clerk or Election Commission Office. Early Voting at remote locations begins March 22. Vote by mail applications vary by location. Please check the county clerk’s office or election commission websites.

Washington, Illinois Municipal Elections

One of the core missions of the League is voter education. When LWVGP was approached by Tazewell County residents asking us to organize a candidate forum for the races for Mayor and 3rd Ward Council member in the City of Washington, we agreed to do so.

Currently, the vast majority of programming, including candidate forums, by Leagues nationwide is being done virtually per the recommendation of both the national and Illinois Leagues. Therefore, we proposed to conduct this forum live, via ZOOM with all participants, candidates and audience at their own location.

Additionally, local, state and national League policy requires that at least two candidates participate and that it is staged in a way that doesn’t advantage or disadvantage either candidate. Forums should be done with the candidates appearing concurrently and “face-to-face” – or in this case, ZOOM to ZOOM.

Mayoral candidate Gary Manier declined to participate unless the candidates and necessary League representatives could be physically present in the same location. The local League board of directors chose to maintain our policy and to cancel the mayoral portion of the forum. With agreement from the two candidates for the 3rd Ward position, the entire forum was then cancelled. LWVGP regrets a resolution could not be reached and the voters of Washington will not have the benefit of education that would have come from this forum.

City of Peoria Mayoral Election

The League also partnered with WCBU 89.9 FM, the Peoria Public Library and WTVP to host a live candidate forum for the two finalists in the Peoria May-

oral race as a follow to the forum we did before the primary with all five candidates. It was to be broadcast live February 25th, on both WTVP and WCBU.

On February 18, WTVP asked to push the event at least two weeks due to some scheduling issues they had. The remaining partners were going to proceed. Then WCBU notified us on February 23rd that Jim Montelongo, one of the finalists from Tuesday's primary, was unavailable for the debate. He had previously committed to attending. His campaign said it interpreted WTVP's withdrawal from the event to mean the event was being rescheduled.

In light of this, WCBU canceled the scheduled debate, as they did not want to proceed with a one-candidate debate. As explained above, League policies prohibited our involvement.

That is unfortunate. Voters in the city of Peoria are the real losers because they will not be able to hear the two mayoral finalists — Montelongo and Rita Ali — exchange ideas. Peorians will not be able to make fully informed decisions before casting their ballots April 6.

We deeply regret the debate was not able to happen but look forward to working with these partners in the future for other races.

———— Connie Romanus & Roberta Parks, Voter Services Chair

MEMBERSHIP

Can it be? Spring is actually on its way? We're hoping that we've seen the last of the frigid weather!

The Membership Committee did meet Feb. 8. Most of the discussion centered around how to recruit and retain members. Also discussed was the possibility of once again having the summer social. More information will be forthcoming.

Please, please spread the word – we love new members! Look to our “Tea for Three” event and share the information with your friend. Or, if you're so inclined, invite friends to your home to participate. It is a great way to attract new members.

Let's see another year of membership growth! Stay healthy! Get vaccinated.

Jan Deissler – 635-1872
Jandeissler77@gmail.com

Linda Millen – 645-2542
tchkids2@sbcglobal.net

DRINKS & DIALOGUE: Returns April 21

“Social Mobility for Girls Born Into Poverty” will be the topic for Drinks & Dialogue in April.

LWVGPP has invited Dawn Jeffries, Ph.D. Founder and Executive Director of Girls Light Our Way (GLOW), to discuss her research. Her presentation will discuss the question “How do African American women born into poverty achieve middle class status?”

Dawn has devoted her life to justice, equality, respect, and service, especially for underserved girls. She received her Ph.D. from Benedictine University and has developed a specialized model for organizations to promote equity for African American girls, girls from all backgrounds experiencing poverty, racism, sexism, and classism. In 2015, she established GLOW as a non-profit to provide tools for mental, physical, and nutritional wellness, self-efficacy and literacies of power.

In April, Dawn will share her research, discussing the common barriers to social mobility, as well as some pathways that the women who escaped poverty were able to construct. Please join us for this incredible session.

Drinks & Dialogue is offered on the third Wednesday of the month to discuss local, state and national topics relating to approved LWV positions aimed at “Making Democracy Work.” The events start with a social at 5:30 p.m; presentations and discussion begin at 6 p.m.

———— Kathleen Kelly, D&D Chair

OBSERVER CORPS TRAINING

If you’d like to know more about covering local government for LWVGPP, mark your calendar for training from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. Saturday, March 20.

We have many governmental meetings that we need Observers to watch. These are typically virtual meetings and most are recorded. We ask that our Observers write up a summary for each meeting. A seasoned Observer will work with you after you are trained.

The Observer Program is structured to ensure that processes and decisions made by public entities are made in the open. Trained League observers attend meetings, note what happens and report back to their community.

[Register in advance here.](#) You will receive a confirmation email and Zoom link. Please let Connie know you are interested in Observing by contacting cro-manus1249@yahoo.com

———— Cheryl Budzinski

*Join us for this virtual Fun-raiser
LWVGP and Beta Zeta Chapter Delta Kappa Gamma Society present*

“Tea for Three” the Off-Broadway hit Starring Emmy Award-winning Elaine Bromka



Wednesday, March 24, 2021
7 – 8 p.m. followed by Q & A with Elaine Bromka
Donation of \$10 per person
(Link to be sent 24 hours prior to the program)

What is it like for a woman when her husband becomes the President of the United States – and she is suddenly thrust into the spotlight? “Tea For Three” explores the hopes, fears, quirks and loves of Lady Bird Johnson, Pat Nixon and Betty Ford in what Mrs. Nixon called “the hardest unpaid job in the world.” Tickets are available for a \$10 donation at lwvgp.org. If you have questions, contact Jan Deissler at jandeissler77@gmail.com.

View a **video clip** at teaforthree.com.

PEORIA CITY COUNCIL: Jan. 26

The joint meeting of the Peoria City Council/Town Board was held on January 26, 2021. Request from Town Officials to approve the January 2021 actual expenditures and anticipated February 2021 expenditures was passed.

Public hearing on combined sewer overflow 2023-2026 rates was opened. There being no comments received, the public hearing was closed. Minutes of January 12 meeting were approved.

Consent Agenda included approval of: 2021 Annual City & County Joint Legislative Agenda; purchase of outdoor warning siren for \$42,216; extension of 2019 storm sewer repair contract with J.C. Dillon in amount of \$900,000; a three-year agreement with Supreme Radio Communications for electronic services in yearly amount \$123,577. Planning and Zoning: requests to adopt an ordinance to approve special use Class C-1 District for adult-use cannabis dispensary at 5001 N. University. Council deferred request for special use C-1 for car wash at 1217 W. Glen and 4926 W. University for more input on traffic flow and community comments.

In regular business: Adopted ordinance amend 2021 Revised Annual Budget relating to the use of South Village TIF Fund Balance in amount of \$495,940 and use of Stormwater Utility Fund balance in amount of \$15,000 for total of \$510,940 to provide additional funding for construction of Fire Station #4 on the south side of city; approved low bid contract with D Joseph Construction Co. for construction of new Fire Station #4 in amount \$2,793,695; resolution to increase compensation of City Manager by \$5,000, to be allocated as a bonus, salary increase or deferred compensation. There was discussion from First District Council member Denise Moore regarding ensuring documentation of minority sub-contractors and workers, as well as using minority workers for trucking needs and architectural design.

The Council delayed action on adopting an ordinance Designating an Area of Urban Decay and Ordinance to remove certain properties from the East Village Growth Cell Tax Increment Development Project area. The Council adopted an ordinance establishing Peoria Combined Sewer Overflow Remediation District and approved resolution setting fees effective May 1, 2023 with planned annual increases through May 1, 2026 for Peoria Combined Sewer Remediation District. Also adopted was an ordinance to amend Peoria Urban Enterprise Zone to include Galena Road Industrial Park (5921, 6021 N Galena Rd), Former Midstate College complex on Northmoor Rd, Industrial site (6209 W. Route 150), Industrial Site (801 SW Jefferson), Shopping Center at (200 Mac Arthur Hwy.) Shopping Center (1928, 2000, 20112, 2020 W. War Memorial Dr.) and Residential Apartments (601 Romeo B. Garret).

—— Connie Romanus, Observer

PEORIA COUNTY ELECTION COMMISSION, Feb. 9

The Peoria County Election Commission met on Feb. 9, with all members present except Mark Ketterer, who attended by phone.

Everything seems to be going smoothly in getting ready for both the February primary and the April general election. The Verizon bill that had been wrongly coded, leading to an enormous bill, has been corrected. Federal Warehouse was awarded the contract to move voting equipment to and from the polls for both elections. They were approximately \$500 less than Mordue and have done a good job in the past.

Locations and times for early voting before the April 6 election will be the same as for the November election starting March 12 outside of those locations that have a primary. One exception will be no polling at the downtown library on Easter Sunday, April 4. The Election Commission office will need to be open that day because of state law. Ballots for the April 6 consolidated general election will be sent out starting February 25 to those voters outside of the City of Peoria. There are 306 different ballot styles in Peoria County!

If approved by the county board, \$19,430 of left over funds from the grant from the Center for Tech and Civic Life will be put into the FY2021 budget. The Center granted an extension for use of those funds until the end of July. Director / Tom Bride anticipates that the funds will be used primarily for expenses related to Covid-19.

There are approximately 73,000 registered voters in Peoria County. As of February 9, 1,950 of them had asked to vote by mail, 950 had voted early, and 772 had sent back their ballots. The canvas for the primary will be held on March 11.

—— Irene Pritzker, Observer

LEGISLATIVE INTERVIEWS

LWVGP will soon begin scheduling annual legislative interviews with our Illinois senators and representatives. These interviews are a great way to strengthen communication and nurture relationships with your legislators. Get involved and let Connie know that you would like to help plan a legislative interview this spring. Her email is cromanus1249@yahoo.com.

It is expected that most interviews will be held by Zoom this year.

—— Cheryl Budzinski



**League of Women Voters
of Greater Peoria**

413 W. Lawndale Ave., Peoria, IL 61604

ON THE WEB: **www.lwvgp.org**

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

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

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Newsletter

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