



Volume 74 Issue 10

October 2021

President's Message

Join us for Drinks & Dialogue

This month I want to highlight one of LWVGP's most important activities: Drinks and Dialogue (D&D). For our newer members, D&D is a monthly program that features social time, a brief program and open discussion on the topic. It is typically starts at 5:30 p.m. on the third Wednesday of each month, so please mark your calendars. The location changes, but is usually announced on our Facebook page and in the monthly newsletter.

Since COVID restrictions began, D&D has been a logistical challenge. Committee chairperson Katie Kelly has worked hard to develop and present programs under difficult circumstances. The committee decided to focus on one of the LWVGP core values: Making Democracy Work.

We were able to meet in person for awhile this summer.

In June, Peoria County Treasurer Nicole Bjerke walked us through a sample tax bill to demonstrate what units of local government we have, how they operate, and why being involved and aware of local government is important.

In August, we hosted Clare Howard of The Community Word and Hannah Alani of WCBU. They facilitated a very spirited discussion about the state of local news media, especially newspapers. There was a particular emphasis on the importance of an informed citizenry in Making Democracy Work.

In September, with the reimposition of indoor masking guidelines, we met via ZOOM with Jean Pearce of the LWV State organization (LWVIL). Jean shared some of the finer points of lobbying vs. education on public policy issues. That triggered a constructive conversation on how the LWVGP might do more to advocate for action on our policy positions.

We obviously can't know how long we will be dealing with the current COVID restrictions. I want to encourage our members to look for news about D&D programs. Pour a glass of your favorite beverage, log in, and participate, until we can again assemble and enjoy the camaraderie of meeting face to face.

——— Terry Kohlbus, LWVGP president

MEET YOUR BOARD MEMBERS



Tim Howard graduated from the University of Notre Dame Law School in January 1976, took the bar exam in February, then started private practice with a Peoria law firm on March 1 of the same year.

“My wife, Patty, and I moved to Peoria because my widowed mother lived in Princeton and because the Chicago Bears games were not blacked out here. Sometime during 1976 Patty joined the LWVGP and she volunteered to be one of the newsletter editors. I remember well mimeographing, folding and stamping the LWVGP Newsletter with her. (How old do you have to be to know what mimeographing means?). By the time, our fourth child arrived, our active involvement with the League had diminished.

“In 2018, I retired from private practice. During the intervening 42 years my law practice consisted primarily of banking, bankruptcy and commercial litigation. At the same time, I also practiced politics. I was elected to three terms on the Peoria County Board (1982–92); appointed to four terms to the board of the Greater Peoria Sanitary District (1996–2008); and elected 20 times as a Democratic precinct committee person in the City of Peoria (1978–2016).

“During those years, I also served as a board member (and as an officer) for several community organizations. These included: the Heart of Illinois United Way: PARC (now known as EPIC); the Peoria Area World Affairs Council (President 1985); the Kickapoo Council of the Girl Scouts (President 1996–98); the University of Notre Dame Club of Peoria (President 1988); and the W. D. Boyce Council of the Boy Scouts of America.

“I have been active with several legal organizations, including the Peoria County Bar Association (President 2015–16); the Illinois State Bar Association (Assembly Member 2016–22); and the American Bar Association.

“I have always been interested in the public policy issues that face local governments. Since becoming a board member in 2019, I have enjoyed helping the LWVGP address issues important to our community. As a grandfather of four, it is important to me to help our community prepare for their futures.

“Finally, since I became a LWVGP board member, I have been lucky to provide volunteer legal services by incorporating the LWVGP as an Illinois Not for Profit Corporation; obtaining a tax exemption for the LWVGP from the IRS under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code; and registering the LWVGP with the Illinois Attorney General as an authorized charity.”

Important Dates:

4 p.m. Mon., Oct. 11: LWVGP executive board, via Zoom.
5:30 p.m. Wed., Oct. 20: Drinks & Dialogue, Voting Rights and State Level Voting Restrictions.
10 a.m.-noon Tues., Nov. 16: LWVIL Forum Moderator training.

MEMBERSHIP

Greetings from the Membership Committee. The heat wave seems to have passed and we're now having great summer weather. Perhaps we'll have a few more very warm days, but fall is here. The daylight is less each day. Enjoy the fall colors as you do your daily tasks.

October 1 was drop day for those who have not renewed membership for the 2021-22 year. It is not too late to send the dues as directed on the website. Thanks to those of you who have paid. We hope others will send renewals soon. We will be making phone calls in the near future — so to avoid that irritating call, just go online and join. Thanks.

We are so fortunate to have a number of new members who joined since March of this year and up to the present time. Following is a list of new members. Please welcome the newcomers and, of course, put them to work on a committee soon. COVID is still with us, but our work goes on.

**Amy Ashley-Raher
Denis & Jeanie Cyr
Stacy Del Vecchio
Deb Hedeman
Sharon Kennedy
Steve Rieker
Mary & Matt Segebart
Jenny Tripses**

**Colleen Callahan Burns
Teresa Cushing
Laura Hartig-Lemon
Pam & Perry Johnson
Leslie McKnight, PhD
Pam Schubach
Abbie Smith
Ann Warth**

If anyone knows of someone who might have been inadvertently omitted from the list, please let Jan know.

Current membership is 110. We have a ways to go to get to 2021 membership and our goal is a 10% increase. If you are an active OLLI member at Bradley we would welcome you to help recruit from those participants. That has proven to be a successful site in the past. Other groups are also good recruiting places.

You've heard the saying "Each one, bring one." If each of us did that we would easily surpass our goal. We ask your help. Thank you.

If you have any questions, please contact one of us.

**Jan Deissler – 635-1872
Jandeissler77@gmail.com**

**Linda Millen – 645-2542
tchkids2@sbcglobal.net**

VOTER SERVICES

The Voter Services Committee has been working on better understanding what our membership and the community wants from us programmatically.

To help us do that, we ask that you watch your email for a survey in October. This is a short survey that asks for input on services such as candidate forums and how we provide them; voter registration; candidate surveys and more.

When you get it, please take a few minutes to complete it so we have feedback from many as we develop an enhanced program of work for this part of your local League of Women Voters.

—— Roberta Parks, Chair

OBSERVER TRAINING

The League of Women Voters trained Observer Corps works to keep local governments accountable and community members informed. You can learn more at this evening training session — 7 p.m. Wednesday Oct. 6 — via Zoom. Registration required: <https://lwvil.app.neoncrm.com/np/clients/lwvil/eventRegistration.jsp?event=157&> A link will be sent in advance.

Please alert John Brady or Cheryl Budzinski (309.253.9594) that you are taking training and what governmental unit you want to Observe. Thanks.

—— Cheryl Budzinski

PEORIA CITY COUNCIL: Sept. 14

Peoria City Council held its regular bi-weekly meeting on Sept. 14, with all members present.

Peoria Township actual expenses for August 2021 were approved, as well as the anticipated expenses for September 2021. The Town of the City of Peoria Financial Report dated March 31, 2021 was received and filed.

Nine items on consent agenda were approved; two items pulled for discussion. A grant award for \$100,000 from the City's Housing and Urban Development Home Fund was approved to Peoria Opportunities Foundation to cover sewer expense overage, with additional funding from Illinois Housing Authority (IDA). Councilor Tim Riegenbach praised the work POC has done to construct thirty new housing units on East Bluff; approved with Councilor John Kelly opposed. Next item discussed was a professional service agreement to establish Keller Station Business Development District. Councilor Riegenbach explained this is for legal fees and will be handled by the Kim Development Group. Councilor Beth Jensen expressed concerns that this is not being set up as special service area and also questioned 1 percent sales tax to developer with no defined end. It was also men-

tioned that this property is owned by Peoria Park District. Chrissie Kapustka, Corporation Counsel, clarified that agreements would be initiated at completion of project and sunset clause for developer would be brought to council for review. Item passed with Councilor Dennis Cyr dissenting.

Two items were received and filed as first reading: first item was to amend building code related to property maintenance and administration and enforcement; the second item was to amend ordinance relating to Fair Housing Commission.

Under new business, Councilor Cyr requested City Manager Patrick Urich and staff review fees incurred by small businesses as there are at least 50 fees that are not relatable or are outdated. This could relieve staff of burden to track these fees, as well as be beneficial to small business.

The next city budget and policy meeting is Oct. 12, and will include how Covid relief funds will be spent.

Note: Peoria City Council meetings can be viewed online at peoriagov.org and on cable access Channel 22 at 6 p.m. on second and fourth Tuesdays. Video and minutes of a Sept. 6 policy session on use of pandemic recovery funds are available at: www.peoriagov.org

—— Connie Romanus, Observer

PEORIA COUNTY BOARD, Sept. 9

The Peoria County Board met Sept. 9, with all members present.

One presentation and three proclamations preceded regular business. The owner of Trefzger's Bakery and developer Katie Kim thanked the board for a \$589,000 Keystone Fund loan that partially enabled their building renovation and relocation to Peoria Heights. Trefzger's was able to repay the loan in full with interest ahead of schedule. Several Board members commented this was an excellent use of funds and look forward to similar business loans in the future. Proclamations recognized National Rail Safety Week, National Preparedness Month, and the 20th anniversary of the events of September 11, 2001.

One citizen offered remarks and a petition related to requested use of American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA) funds available to the county to improve broadband internet service in rural Peoria County. An email from Beth Crider, Regional Superintendent of Schools, was read supporting this use of ARPA funds.

The regular agenda was short with the seven items on the consent agenda passing on a 17-1 vote with no discussion. Two items were pulled from the consent agenda for discussion. One requested approval of the Farnsworth Group and the other of River City Construction for preliminary consultation on the Health and Human Service Campus project. The county is exploring consolidation of these

services at a remodeled Health Department site on Sheridan Road, or relocation of services to another existing site, or construction of a new facility. Following discussion both passed on 17-1 and 16-2 votes, respectively.

One resolution was approved on a 17-1 vote accepting a grant agreement that funds independent contractor attorneys who serve as appointed Guardians ad Litem in juvenile and neglect court. A second resolution approving the collective bargaining agreement between the county and the Fraternal Order of Police Labor Council-Corrections unit also passed on a 17-1 vote.

A proclamation was approved on a 15-3 vote extending the Declaration of Emergency due to COVID-19 in Peoria County.

———— Jim Runyon, Observer

PEORIA COUNTY ELECTION COMMISSION, Sept. 14

The Peoria County Election Commission met on Tuesday, September 14, with all present but Commissioner Sandra Burke arriving a few minutes late.

The commission approved a three year contract with SOE Software for on-line election judge training. They provided training during the COVID-19 lockdown and were found to be very useful. There will still be in person training, but the additional online feature will aid with training on the new voting system. Peoria County State's Attorney's office will work out contractual issues.

Two proposals had been received that day in response to the Request for Proposal for a new voting system. They were from Election Systems & Software (ES&S), the nation's largest vendor, and Hart InterCivic. Director Tom Bride wants both vendors to come to Peoria early in October to present to the evaluation committee. He is hoping that the committee will present their choice at the November commission meeting. The decision will then go to the Peoria County committee in December and the full County Board in January.

A discussion was held about new mail drop boxes. Political party leaders were concerned about security. Director Bride wants to procure boxes through this year's budget; number and placement can be discussed next month.

Also discussed was return postage for Vote by Mail. If a ballot comes back with inadequate postage, the Commission is required to pay it. However, 40% of mail-in ballots in the last election were returned through the drop boxes, so there was no charge. The Post Office will be reminded to put a postmark on those envelopes, even though they have postage paid printed on them.

Unfortunately, during the public comment item, members of the public were allowed to ramble on about supposed issues that occurred in other jurisdictions.

———— Irene Pritzker, Observer

PEORIA HOUSING AUTHORITY, Sept. 7

The Board of Commissioners of PHA held its regular meeting Sept. 7, with quorum present. Several members of the public attenders to express concerns regarding conditions of PHA housing family of seven scheduled to move into before end of September.

The Gardner family of seven has been assigned to Taft temporary housing and conditions of 2-unit location include mold, water damage, uncovered electrical outlets, as well as other issues. Mrs. Gardner was present in addition to Karrie Alms, Elaine Hopkins, Lawrence Maushard, and Allison Galvan.

Community members expressed concern regarding lack of communication to Gardner family regarding when unit would be available, checklist to ensure repairs completed and perceived lack of respect from PHA staff. Comments took 30 minutes of allotted time at beginning of board meeting. Mr. Maushard called for dismissal of Chairman Carl Cannon and CEO Jackie Newman.

Ms. Alms stated she had filed complaint this date with U.S. Housing and Urban Development (HUD) as 2022 PHA plan was not available for review, in addition to lack of digital access to plan information.

Elaine Hopkins spoke on behalf of American Civil Liberty Union (ACLU) and member of North Valley Neighborhood association regarding locked gates at Taft complex over past year. She cited incident where emergency responders were not able to respond to call due to access issues. She has requested documentation under Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). Chairman Cannon expressed appreciation for comments and told group issues would be addressed.

Consent agenda was approved without discussion. Resolutions approved to upgrade flooring in common areas at Sterling Towers and Taft Homes redevelopment final closing documents. A Rector and Reeder & Lofton representative gave presentation on FY 2020 financial audit. Positive review with comments for improvement in turnaround of units and how wait list managed. One finding related to financial reconciliation reporting, with operation improvement plan developed. Financial employees recognized for improvements in operations and cooperation during audit.

Note: WCBU reporter Hannah Alani interviewed Jackie Newman on September 16,= about Taft redevelopment: <https://www.wcbu.org/local-news/2021-09-16/q-a-interim-peoria-housing-authority-director-jackie-newman-answers-questions-on-taft-redevelopment>

———— Connie Romanus, Observer



Should You Drink That?

The Unfolding Story of PFAS in Our Lives

PFAS: Per- and Polyfluorinated Alkyl Substances, also known as the "Forever Chemicals"

Monday, October 4, 2021 (Online Event)

6 – 7:30 pm (Central Time)

Register by October 1: <https://tinyurl.com/PFAS-OurLives>

Registration is free. Zoom link will be emailed to registrants prior to the event.

Please join us as our presenters help us understand how PFAS have become a big part of our lives – present in food packaging, household products and drinking water – and what we know about how they affect our health. As awareness of PFAS contamination grows, communities are struggling to cope with tainted drinking water while engaging in advocacy to increase public awareness and bring about constructive change. Learn what the federal government and states are doing to establish safe standards for drinking water and ban the use of PFAS in manufacturing. Most importantly, learn what you can do to help protect yourself, your family and your community.

Jeff Lamont – Retired hydrogeologist, works with **SOH2O (Save Our H2O)** to ensure safe drinking water for residents in Northeast Wisconsin and to advocate for state and federal standards for PFAS compounds. Jeff resides in the Tyco/JCI groundwater contamination plume in the Marinette and Town of Peshtigo area and has a private well impacted by PFAS. Jeff and his wife have been living with bottled water for drinking and cooking for the last 3.5 years.

Erika Schreder – Science Director, **Toxic-Free Future**, conducts and publishes research on toxic chemicals, their presence in people and products, and safer alternatives.

Deanna White – Minnesota Director, **Clean Water Action**, coordinates EPA and state level interactions for policy and legislation. Deanna has an extensive background in community organizing and advocacy.

For more information, email lwwumrr@lwwmn.org.





**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
2021-2022**

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Newsletter

Terry Bibb Knight

terry.bibb.freelance@gmail.com