

President's Message

## Applaud a key LWVGP function

This month it is my pleasure to report on one of LWVGP's most important missions: Voter Services. Under the determined leadership of the very competent Roberta Parks our Voter Services Committee does several things that are increasingly valuable in making our local democracy work.

**Candidate Forums** The Committee organizes forums for all kinds of local races — mayors, council members, treasurers, clerks, school boards, park boards, county boards — as well as state and federal representatives. Hosting these forums is not easy. The Committee works diligently to be fair to all candidates both in fact and in perception. That means juggling timing, locations, moderators, and questions/issues to be discussed. Sometimes the Committee partners with other organizations. Recent partnerships have included NAACP, Peoria Public Library, Fondulac Public Library and WCBU.

**Voter registration** We register newly naturalized citizens. We also provide voter registration at community events, assisted living organizations, libraries, etc.

**Voter Guides and Surveys** Occasionally, the Committee prepares guides or surveys for targeted local races and works with the ILVW. For example, they will use the Illinois Voter Guide for the upcoming June 28 primary. Watch for candidate information as we get closer!

**Mock elections in high schools** In the past, the committee has run mock elections in high schools during presidential election years. We look forward to hosting them again post-Covid.

Given shrinking news organizations and the confusion that typically reigns on social media, offering voters a way to get unbiased, non-partisan and reliable information is a noble and worthy undertaking. Thanks to Rob and her committee members for their contribution to making our democracy work — and work better.

——— Terry Kohlbuss, LWVGP president

## Important Dates (all ZOOM):

4 p.m. Mon., Feb. 13: LWVGP Executive Board.

5:30 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 15: Drinks & Dialogue, topic TBA.

## MEET YOUR BOARD MEMBERS



### **Connie Romanus**

I retired from 44 years in healthcare management in 2015 to spend more time with family and civic engagement. Hard to believe it has been almost seven years this spring!

I was attracted to League of Women Voters after attending several candidate forums and meeting a few members. After joining the local League, I became involved with Voter Service Committee and was hooked on helping to plan candidate forums. I was asked to serve on the Board of LWVGP in 2017 and was privileged to serve as President of the local league for 2019-2021 term. I have been involved with Drinks & Dialogue and the Observer Program over the past three years as well.

Having a love of reading, I volunteered with adult literacy program at Common Place several years and currently volunteer at Trewyn Grade School in the Day Treatment program.

I am fortunate to be the oldest of eight children in a close-knit family with parents who encouraged us to question things we did not understand or agree with and engage in debate around the dining room table. One downside to this is being able to track multiple conversations and chime in at any time (a hard habit to break!).

We have two adult children and six grandchildren, with three in college and the youngest recently completing basic training in the United States Air Force. In addition, we have four great-grandchildren, who live in upper Wisconsin. We enjoy visits with them and keeping in touch.

I enjoy reading, gardening, planning travel and avoiding cooking when possible!

## MEMBERSHIP

Today I read that Peoria and the Midwest are experiencing Frost Quakes. Interesting the new weather terms that we hear during extreme cold! Hoping you are safe and warm!

Our membership continues to grow – three new members in the month of January gives us 128 members.

Welcome:

**Eileen Steed**

**Michelle Bohm**

**Hind Abi-Akar**

We look forward to involving these members in the many League activities.

It's never too late to invite our friends to join the League. Some exciting things are happening and with this being an election year there will be an interest in the candidate forums.

Hoping for warmer weather soon and a return to some in person activities. In the meantime, take part in the many Zoom opportunities.

**Jan Deissler – 635-1872**

[jandeissler77@gmail.com](mailto:jandeissler77@gmail.com)

## VOTER SERVICES

Voter Services continues to work on candidate forums for the June 2022 elections. We have four sets of folks willing to organize one or more forums. Now we wait to see which offices have contested races.

We have reached out to WCBU — a partner on successful forums in the past — to see if they would like to work together for the 17th Congressional District race. This is currently Cheri Bustos' district, and she has already announced that she will not run for re-election.

Between the staff at WCBU and our committee, we are reaching out to the other Leagues in the district (Kankakee, Rock Island, Freeport, McDonough County, and McLean County) to see if we can do one big forum. Watch for more details!

We will also partner with the League of Women Voters of Illinois on the Illinois Voter Guide for certain targeted races. In our survey last fall, you told us voter guides are something you find value in, so we are going to provide them to you.

If in that same survey, you indicated you wanted to help with forums or candidate surveys, please be a bit more patient – we will be in touch soon!

—— Roberta Parks, Chair

# LWV of Illinois Training & Opportunities



One way we support democracy is by reporting on local governments. All Observers are trained by the state League — the next session comes up fast: 7-8 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 3, on Zoom. Learn more at <https://tockify.com/lwvil/detail/339/1643936400000>

You can learn a lot through LWVIL resources. Here are a few other possibilities coming up this winter, all available through [www.lwvl.org](http://www.lwvl.org):

**Feb. 7:** 6:30-8 p.m. LWV Upper Mississippi River Climate Workshop

**Feb. 9:** 7-8 p.m. Naperville League on tracking campaign donations

**Feb. 17:** 7-8 p.m. Moderator Training.

**Feb. 20:** 2-3 p.m. Rockford League on Illinois redistricting

**March 5-11:** LWVIL Issues Briefing

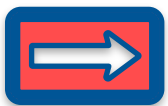
## WATCH AS PEORIA REDISTRICTS

Most League members understand the importance of redistricting every 10 years when census data becomes available.

Peoria County's effort was exemplary — open, bipartisan and fair. In the City of Peoria, the Mayor and Council members have just begun to balance the city's five districts. The goals include districts which are compact, contiguous and of nearly equal population. To end up with roughly 22,630 people in each, Districts 1, 2 and 3 must expand; Districts 4 and 5 must contract. It's not easy.

The council is meeting as a committee of the whole:

Meetings have been scheduled at 6 p.m. Tuesdays, Feb. & Feb.15; March 1, 15, 29. Maps and other information are available at <http://www.peoriagov.org/redistricting>.



## **Your skills can help LWVGP**

We need: LWVGP Board and committee members.

We need: A co-chair for Membership to work with Jan Deissler.

We need: Observers to inform us about local government.

(LWVIL training required, session available Feb. 3.).

We need: A "Weebly" expert to update our website.

We need: Members interested in becoming LWVGP leaders.

Please contact Nominating Committee Chair Cheryl Budzinski 253-9594,  
or committee members Mollye Bright, Shelley Epstein, Nancy Long or Jim Runyon

**by Feb 8.**

### **PEORIA CITY COUNCIL: Jan. 11**

The council members set dates for policy meetings to discuss redistricting of City of Peoria based on 2020 census results. Meetings are scheduled January 18, February 1 and 15, March 1, 15, and 29. Check [www.peoriagov.org](http://www.peoriagov.org) for more details on how to attend one of these virtual sessions. The goal is for districts to be nearly equal in population, compact, contiguous, respect geographic boundaries and shared interests, and preserve incumbent districts.

Emily Cahill, Director of Peoria Park District, presented overview of \$600,000 of updates scheduled for Trewyn Park to include playground, basketball court, and shelter to provide public space for quality social activity.

Consent Agenda was passed with one exception: a contract for demolition of properties was deferred for two weeks pending clarification. Presentations from Peoria Police Department and Fire Department were received by Council. Reports gave overviews of department hiring, attrition and retention over past year, as well as diversity demographics.

Council members continue to discuss concerns regarding potential parking, noise levels and overcrowding, regarding approval of short-term rentals in Uplands neighborhood. Mayor Rita Ali reminded the councilors that policies have been developed to address saturation in neighborhoods and encouraged members to be consistent with this.

Under new business, Councilman John Kelly asked for report back on program requiring landlords to register rental property with focus on the impact of program on available, quality housing. It was noted this program started 25 years ago.

Three citizens addressed council with complaints regarding condition of city streets after January 1 snowstorm and public safety issues.

Minutes and video of meeting also available at [www.peoriagov.org](http://www.peoriagov.org)

—— Connie Romanus, Observer

## **PEORIA COUNTY BOARD: Jan. 13**

Peoria County Board held its regular meeting Jan. 13 with all present. There were no Citizen's Remarks.

After a presentation by Tom Bride, Election Commission Executive Director, several questions and some discussion, the board passed an amended budget amendment permitting the purchase of a new paper ballot voting system and upgrades to the existing electronic poll books, and new label printers.

The Consent agenda passed on a vote of 17-1 without discussion. Among items approved were:

- o A budget amendment that funds two positions within county departments for two of the three employees who lost their positions with the County Auditor's office. The third employee chose not to accept another county position.

- o Two grants to fund specific PCAPS services.

- o PCAPS veterinary services contract extension.

- o Approval of the Peoria City/County Landfill 2022 budget.

- o Cedar Hills Drive engineering for resurfacing work.

- o Dogtown Road bridge replacement.

The regular agenda consisted of ten items. All were approved, including:

- o Special use to permit short term rentals (Airbnb/VRBO) on three properties on River Beach Road in Medina and Chillicothe townships.

- o Rezoning request in Medina Township.

- o Placement of temporary meteorological towers to record and measure wind data for up to three years in Millbrook, Princeville and Brimfield townships.

- o Zoning two tracts on an island in the Illinois River adjacent to the town of Chillicothe as "A-2" Agricultural. (This island had been proposed as a barge depot in 2021, and this designation ensures that this use will not be permitted).

- o A resolution to replace the current facilities housing a number of county services with a new health and human services campus. All the services have not yet been determined. However, the Health Department, Coroner, Regional Superintendent of Schools, and Sustainability and Recycling Department will definitely be included. This permits the county to continue activities to replace the current



Health Department facilities on Sheridan Road and the Coroner's facility on Gift Ave. rather than renovating either.

o Suspension of the Rules to permit extension of the Declaration of Emergency due to COVID-19 in the county.

The board went into Executive Session to discuss a personnel matter.

You can link to the meeting at [agendahttps://www.peoriacounty.org/AgendaCenter/ViewFile/Agenda/\\_01132022-1124](https://www.peoriacounty.org/AgendaCenter/ViewFile/Agenda/_01132022-1124) and video at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lCrSQFNvuwc>

———— Jim Runyon, Observer

### **ELECTION COMMISSION: Jan. 11 & 14**

The Peoria County Board of Election Commissioners met Jan. 11, with four members in person and Mark Ketterer participating by phone. Contract negotiations for the new voting system were almost complete. The purchase passed two county committees unanimously, and the budget amendment allowing the purchase was to be voted on by the whole County Board.

Most of the meeting was taken up by an explanation of the new County precinct boundaries. State law requires precincts to have approximately 1200 registered voters per precinct. This would result in a reduction from 169 precincts to 116 in the County. In addition to other considerations, there can be no crossing of township lines. Chillicothe and Elmwood will see no changes.

Staff was currently working on polling places, trying to make only small adjustments. They considered how much parking and how much equipment would be needed at each polling place due to larger numbers of registered voters.

The proposed precinct lines can be found on line at [www.peoriacounty.org](http://www.peoriacounty.org)

On Jan. 14, the Board of Elections voted to approve the precinct boundaries as presented earlier. Lines are drawn based on registered voters, not the census, but work had to wait for State and Federal districts to be drawn before finalizing the county. Executive Director Tom Bride feels resources will be allocated better with fewer precincts. Based on projected early and mail-in ballots, approximately 50% of voters will not be at polling places on election day. Concern was expressed by Commissioner Jeanne Williamson that there be enough equipment at the larger polling places to avoid long lines. Precincts can be subdivided in the future if that proves necessary.

———— Irene Pritzker, Observer



## Maya Angelou portrayed on U.S. quarters!

LWVIL worked hard to get poet/activist Maya Angelou included in the American Women Quarters Program. This four-year effort will feature prominent women in U.S. history. Angelou is the first Black woman honored.

Learn more at: <https://www.usmint.gov/news/press-releases/united-states-mint-announces-designs-for-2022-american-women-quarters-program-coins>



League of Women Voters  
of Greater Peoria

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### League of Women Voters of Greater Peoria Board of Directors 2021-2022

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