



THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

OF McLEAN COUNTY

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The Voter

Vol. 82 No. 5

February 2016

Save the Date:

Hidden McLean County

Tuesday, January 26, 7:00 p.m.

- **Normal Public Library Community Room**
- Providers and clients from MCCA's Countering Domestic Violence and Heartland Head Start. See page 3 for details.

Drinks & Dialogue

Wednesday, February 10, 5:30 p.m.

- **Michael's Restaurant, 110 W. Washington St., Bloomington**
- Glen Ludwig and Sally Rudolph lead discussion on "Exploring Opportunities for Improved Government." More on page 3.

LWV of Illinois 2016 Issues Briefing

Saturday, February 27, 9:30 a.m.

- **University Center, 525 S. State St., Chicago**
- Panels, speakers and workshops on hot issues.
- For information and registration, go to the LWV of Illinois website, <http://www.lwvil.org/issuesbriefing.html>.
- LWV of McLean Co. will reimburse members' registration fees. Contact President Kathy Tosh at info@lwvmclean.org or 309-530-2050.

Candidate Forum

Thursday, March 3, 6:00 p.m.

- **University Galleries, 11 Uptown Circle, Normal**
- Coroner and McLean County Board District 10 contests.
- Co-sponsored with WGLT.

International Women's Day Breakfast

Saturday, March 5, 8:30 a.m. Buffet

- **Eastland Suites Conf. Ctr., 1801 Eastland Dr., Bloomington**
- Co-sponsored with Soroptimist International & McLean County India Association. See page 7.
- Reservations and payment to Karen Fleming 309-454-2513 or kfleming1973@gmail.com. Tell her that you want to sit at the League table!

From Our President

Happy 2016!

The year ahead promises to be a busy one for the League. With the election in November, our **Voter Services co-chairs are looking for individuals to help with voter registration as well as poll watching** for the March primaries and general election. Neither activities take a great deal of time so if you are interested in participating, **please contact Phylis VerSteegh or Teri Liston.**

We are delighted to have a senior from Illinois State University doing a 135 hour internship with us this semester. **Brian Hoekstra**, a political science major, sought us out to complete his final experience and, of course, we said YES!!! He is helping with Voter Services and our two studies that will be accelerating in activity during the next few months. We hope you are able to meet Brian at one of our many functions over the next 6 months.

On March 5th we will once again join with the Soroptimists and the McLean County India Association to celebrate International Women's Day during a breakfast and program at Eastland Suites. With a continuing focus on supporting each other across cultures, this year we will explore how we, as women, work together to support each other in the workplace and other environments. Our panel will be Senna Adjabeng, Hansi Jaggi, and Stephanie Wong; and moderated by Loretta Thirtyacre.

If you haven't already, please make a reservation by emailing kfleming1973@gmail.com and indicate you would like to sit at the League table. As in the past, tickets are \$25 and only \$10 for students. We hope you can join us!

Already looking forward to spring, please **mark your calendars for April 11th for the LWVMC Annual Dinner. Beginning at 5:30 p.m.**, we will enjoy socializing, a buffet dinner and silent auction at the Holiday Inn and Suites, 3202 East Empire St. Our featured speaker this year is Judge Knecht. Tickets can be obtained from any board member or by contacting Dianne Williamson, dd.willi@hotmail.com and making a reservation.

As the primaries approach, we encourage all to get informed regarding the candidates and their views. In that light, **WGLT and the League will hold a candidate forum on March 3rd in Uptown Normal from 6:00 – 6:30 p.m. at the University Galleries.** Locally, there are only two contested races – Coroner and District 10 of the County Board. The candidates for these two positions will respond to questions gathered by WGLT. **Please attend or turn on your radio to learn more about our choices and exercise your right to vote in March and November!**

Sincerely,

Kathy

Have you renewed? Please pay your dues online by credit card or PayPal on our website: <http://www.lwvmclean.org/lwvForm/contact/contactform.php>.

Or, write your check to LWV McLean County and mail with this form to:



LWV McLean County c/o Joe Gibson
5 White Place
Bloomington, IL 61701

Thank You!

Annual Individual Dues	\$65
2 nd Household Member	\$30
Full-Time Student	\$30

Name(s) _____

Address _____

Telephone _____ Email _____

I'm interested in _____

Participate in Local Programs

Hidden McLean County, January 26

Many groups of people are invisible to the majority of our community. The League of Women Voters hosts an annual program to highlight some of these groups, to help us understand their experiences and to discover what services are available to them.

This year's program will look at two groups: very low income families that need early childhood services, and victims of domestic violence. The service organizations that help them are Heartland Head Start and Mid Central Community Action's Domestic Violence services. Each of these organizations will bring a client, and each will discuss the services they offer. A unique feature of our *Hidden McLean County* programs are the individuals who share their personal stories, giving us an intimate picture of their experiences.

Providing information about the organizations will be Jaylene Taubert, Parent Family and Community Engagement Manager for Heartland Head Start, and Senna Adjabeng, Director of MCCA's Countering Domestic Violence & Mayors Manor Programs.

Come join us for this unique program which will be held on Tuesday, January 26, 7:00 pm at the Normal Public Library's Community Room. It is free and open to the public.

—Laurie Bergner

Drinks & Dialogue, February 10: Exploring Opportunities for Improved Government



New location for D&D: Due to the closure of A. Renée, please join us for *Drinks & Dialogue* at Michael's Restaurant at 110 W. Washington St. on the square in downtown Bloomington.

As usual, the evening will begin at 5:30 p.m. with socializing, and the discussion will begin at 6:00. Since 2016 is an election year, our February and April topics are political in nature.

On February 10th, our topic is "Exploring Opportunities for Improved Government" with Glen Ludwig and Sally Rudolph. Glen and Sally will discuss the "Exploring Government Initiative" which is a project linked to improving the effectiveness and efficiency in Illinois government. That should give us a lot to talk about!!!

On April 20th the discussion is "Campaign Finance" with Bob Bradley. We hope you will join us for what will likely be spirited discussions.

Bring a friend and join us on Wednesday, February 10 at Michael's Restaurant. Hope to see you there!!!

—Becky Hines and Camille Taylor

Pollwatchers Needed!

Voters Services has begun organizing pollwatchers for the March 15 primary election. There are no special requirements to do this but participants need to go through instructions and a short training session. We will hold that training session at 6:00 p.m. at the First Presbyterian Church in Normal on a date to be determined.

On Election Day you can pollwatch for a short time (30 minutes) or longer if you desire. We will assign precincts to cover and times at a later date. This a great way to learn procedures at the election sites and to experience the election from the election authorities' point of view.

If you are interested in being a LWV pollwatcher please email Teri (terill55@hotmail.com) or Phylis (phylvs49@gmail.com) by February 15. Watch for further information and thanks for your help!



Mental Health discussion at Drinks & Dialogue on December 9 at A. Renée Wine Café

Voter Services At Work

Voter Registration and More

Voter Services has participated in several recent Voter Registration Events, including the State of the Union Watch Party at ISU, and at several local church services. Susan Alford, Judie Bey, Teri Liston and Mary Zeller handed out information cards and registered voters at Epiphany Church and Heartland Community Church along with County Clerk Kathy Michael. They registered several voters and educated many people on mail-in and on-line registration.

Upcoming registration events are planned for Normal Community High School and Bloomington High School. Thanks to all LWV members who have gone through the training and subsequently assisted with these and upcoming registration events!

WGLT is partnering with LWV to host a candidate forum for the contested Coroner and McLean County Board District 10 races. Scheduled forum date is Thursday, March 3, at 6:00 pm. This event will be broadcast live on WGLT and then rebroadcast at a later date. We're also looking at the possibility of a forum with the four District 2 candidates.

Working with our ISU intern, Brian Hoekstra, we developed and printed information cards that include our LWV web address as well as the McLean County Clerk and Bloomington Election Commission addresses. Our intern is also working with members to develop voter guides for the contested Coroner and McLean County Board District 10 and 2 races.

If you are interested in being a LWV pollwatcher for the March primary please email Teri or Phylis (terill55@hotmail.com) or (phylvs49@gmail.com) by February 15. Pollwatchers will observe for at least 30 minutes on election day. A short training session is required.

–Teri Liston, Voter Services Co-Chair

Presidential Puzzle

Candidates got your head spinning? Take a look at the interesting survey on the website [iSideWith.com](http://www.isidewith.com), <http://www.isidewith.com/elections/2016-presidential-quiz>, which matches your values and beliefs with a presidential candidate. The site was started to “boost voter engagement and education using information, data and breaking technologies.” It is not affiliated with any party or interest group (and not sponsored or endorsed by the LWV.)

SOTU Watch Party

The American Democracy Project at ISU in conjunction with Heartland Community College served as the Midwest hub for a Watch Party for the State of the Union (SOTU) Address on January 12. The League of Women Voters of McLean County was invited to register voters at the event.



League intern Brian Hoekstra (seated) with Alex Schreiner from iCitizen who is running the tech

Several League members were present to give information to students and attendees and register new voters. The ISU Political Science Department along with Heartland's Political Science Department held a discussion prior to the President's speech. About 900 students were in attendance to watch the President and to participate in the twitter feed which was broadcast nationwide.

The national director of the American Democracy Project said they were very pleased with the organization and attendance at this event. It provided LWV lots of exposure. Thanks to all members who helped with the event.

–Phylis VerSteegh, Voter Services Co-Chair

Giant screen at the SOTU watch party



Exploring Government Initiative

EGI Study Starts Interviews

Our teams from the Exploring Government Initiative (EGI) have been busy interviewing numerous local McLean County officials. So far we have met with the following: two city managers, three mayors (or village presidents) of cities outside of Bloomington-Normal, one transit manager, one park district president, two township supervisors, one airport authority manager, one county engineer, one executive director of a water reclamation district, one township fire district chief, one chief assessment officer, one president of a street lighting district, a planning commission executive director, and a chairman of a water service district. Pending are a township road commissioner and another mayor.

Many thanks to all who have worked on these interviews. And, a special shout-out to our team leaders who spend a great deal of time setting up the meetings. They are Carol Straka, Mary Beth Taylor, Maureen O’Keefe, Alexis Kalish, Vickie Smith and Joe Gibson.

This process is definitely a learning experience as we move forward, especially related to who should be interviewed and where the most valuable insight will be discovered.

–Sally Rudolph, EGI Study Co-Chair

Around & About

Laurie Bergner gave a presentation on immigration to the McLean County Diversity Project on January 10. She and former Sheriff Mike Emery addressed facts and fiction about immigration for the group of junior high and high school students.



In early December an ISU Theater MFA Candidate, Joey Banks presented a staged reading at Heartland Theatre for his thesis. The play was called *An Alliance of Brats* and contemporized Henrik Ibsen’s comedy of errors, *A League of Youth*, which was written in 1869. The adapted play took place at an Iowa Caucus, present day, with opportunities for the audience to interact. Banks asked several League members to participate in talkback panels each night after the show to discuss some of the issues raised in the reading. League participants included:

George Gordon, Diana Hauman, Tari Renner, Sally Rudolph and Phylis VerSteegh.

In Search of Better Government in Illinois

In the previous column, Sally Rudolph provides a progress update on our League’s Exploring Government Initiative (EGI). Not surprisingly, with the challenges facing most governments in Illinois, there are numerous organizations seeking paths to better government. During the pre-launch planning of our League’s EGI, we discussed the importance of effective and efficient government.

Early in January, Illinois Lieutenant Governor Evelyn Sanguinetti’s Task Force report was released, titled “Delivering Efficient, Effective, and Streamlined Government to Illinois Taxpayers.” Our EGI efforts are focused only on McLean County and certainly will not match the over 400 pages of the statewide report. We are happy both efforts recognize the importance of strategically adapting Illinois and local government structures to better focus on being effective and efficient.

Governments typically are slow to change. The Lieutenant Governor’s report recognizes that local governments are heavily burdened by excessive top-down regulations which certainly hinder local governments’ capture of efficiency. In response to this, the state-wide report includes 12 consolidation-related recommendations. The report also identifies a number of state laws that need to be changed to make consolidations of some local governments possible. Also included are 15 recommendations to address the troublesome unfunded mandates which have been generously handed down to local governments over the years.

At this point the Task Force Report is waiting for legislation to be drafted, introduced, and approved in Springfield. We have heard that some legislation may be introduced in the next 30 days. If and how long it will require to move bills through the law-making process is anyone’s guess. But while we wait, it feels like there are some in Springfield who might support moving more control back to local governments.

Our local exploration process continues via interviews. And, we also strive to better understand how potential Springfield action might be incorporated locally to support more effective and efficient government.

–Glen Ludwig,
EGI Study Co-Chair

Mental Health Action Committee Update: *The Journey*

McLean County enters 2016 stronger and growing; it embraces how to shatter the stigma of mental illness, how to be prepared to respond and understand, and how to offer support.

In the last year over 500 persons in McLean County have been trained in Mental Health First Aid, an 8-hour course that introduces participants to warning signs of mental health concerns, builds an understanding of the impact, overviews available supports and answers the question, “**What can I do?**” (The training schedule for Mental Health First Aid is included below.)

These sessions are for anyone – teachers, employers, parents, businesspersons, social service professionals, interested citizens and law enforcement. The local program is a collaborative effort among mental health providers, educators, funders and health care providers.

In fact the Illinois Prairie Community Foundation has recently provided a grant for the second year, which will be used to purchase educational materials that will keep the registration fee at only \$10.

In the months following the course, participants

shared the following:

- 89% felt prepared, 50% very well-prepared to help someone in a mental health crisis
- 83% of those responding have used the skills they learned in a real life situation
- 50% tried to raise awareness of mental health issues in their family, with 41% trying to raise awareness of mental health issues in their community

The reality is that few of us are comfortable when someone is mentally ill or experiencing an emotional or mental health crisis. It can be tough to respond, know what to say, how to intervene. The course will provide the tools to be more confident, observant, engaging and supportive.

The League’s “Mental Health Study - Roadblocks to Results” community program has begun to speak in depth to Mental Health First Aid, 211 and the County’s Mental Health Action Plan. The latter two topics will be featured in subsequent newsletters. All of these programs are consistent with the League’s support of education and awareness following the Mental Health Study.

Coming up, the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI Livingston & McLean) and The Neighbors Association of Normal (NAN) are hosting "The Closing The Gap Project" on Saturday, February 6, 2016 at 10:00 a.m. The LWV is not a co-sponsor or host but wishes to share this information as an event of potential interest

The forum will be at the Normal Community Activity Center, 110 Douglas St., Normal. It will include representatives from the judicial system, politics, law enforcement, health care and local tax payers. The discussion will focus on the needs of people with mental health concerns as well as meeting those needs in our community. Forum contact: LarryRShapiro@hotmail.com

---Judy Buchanan
Mental Health Action Committee Chair



MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID

Sometimes, first aid isn't a bandage, or CPR, or calling 911. Sometimes, first aid is YOU!

You are more likely to encounter someone in an emotional or mental crisis than someone having a heart attack. The Mental Health First Aid class teaches a 5-step action plan to offer initial help to people with the signs and symptoms of a mental illness or in a crisis, and connect them with the appropriate care. Mental Health First Aid is for anyone – parents, neighbors, students, first responders, teachers, leaders of faith communities, human resources professionals, and caring citizens.

Are you interested in learning to be part of the solution?



Training Dates

Date/Time	Event—8 hr Course	Place	To Register, call
1/19/16	Youth Mental Health First Aid	Advocate BroMenn Medical Center	(800) 323-8622
3/7/16	Mental Health First Aid	OSF St. Joseph Medical Center	(309) 661-5151
5/5/16	Youth Mental Health First Aid	Advocate BroMenn Medical Center	(800) 323-8622
7/15/16	Mental Health First Aid	OSF St. Joseph Medical Center	(309) 661-5151
9/5/16	Youth Mental Health First Aid	OSF St. Joseph Medical Center	(309) 661-5151
11/10/16	Mental Health First Aid	Advocate BroMenn Medical Center	(800) 323-8622

Mental Health First Aid courses are offered through a collaboration among the McLean County Center for Human Services, McLean County Health Department, Area Health Education Center, Women to Women Giving Circle of Illinois Prairie Community Foundation, Advocate BroMenn Medical Center, and OSF St. Joseph Medical Center.








