



**THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
OF McLEAN COUNTY**

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**The official address of the
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**New web site!
www.lwvmclean.org**

Vol. 75 No. 3 **Bulletin** *November 2008*

League of Women Voters of McLean County
is sponsoring a pre-election program –

Voting in America

It's been a bumpy road...and it ain't over yet!

Thursday, October 30 - 7:00 p.m.

McLean County Gov't Building - East & Front Sts, downtown Bloomington

Issues that affect voting in America will be examined, such as barriers to voting, electronic voting and hanging chads, and voter turnout. It will also look at how gender affects politics, voting and women elected officials.

Finally, it will compare American voting with voting in other democracies. You might be surprised by how we compare!

Well-respected in our community, our speakers are:

Dr. Lane Crothers, Professor of Politics and Government at Illinois State University recently returned from spending six months as Visiting Professor in North American Studies at the British Library in London. Besides writing five books and numerous articles, he has also received teaching and research awards. Dr. Crothers, an excellent and provocative speaker has spoken many times for the League.

Dr. Kathleen Montgomery, Associate Professor of Political Science at Illinois Wesleyan University, specializing in gender politics in recent Eastern European countries, has written a book, "Women's Access to Political Power in Post-Communist Europe." Dr. Montgomery is a popular and well-respected professor at IWU.

This program should help us understand where our voting system stands and how it compares to other democracies. We hope you can all attend this most interesting program which is free and open to the public.

Some of you may remember Lynda Hungerford, LWV of McLean County member & past president. Lynda and her husband, Harold, moved several years ago to California. His obituary appeared recently in the Pantagraph.

If you would like to contribute to Harold's memorial fund, please send a check made out to the Bloomington Public Library Foundation to me. Carol Reitan & I will send them in and let Lynda know her former Leaguers made this donation. Sally Rudolph, 1918 Owens Dr., Bloomington, IL 61701

Dear League Members,

I've been reflecting on all the work our League has engaged in during this critical election cycle. In late summer we unexpectedly lost the services of our former Voter Services Chair, and we're still seeking someone to replace Barb Case. But that didn't mean our League curtailed its Voter Services activities. First, in August, we took a position *against* the proposal you'll find on your ballot asking whether or not the State of Illinois should hold a Constitutional Convention in 2010. Among the concerns prompting our opposition is the very real possibility that protections now guaranteed by the current Constitution could be minimized or even completely eliminated from a new one. In short, our League is of the opinion that the current Illinois Constitution continues to serve us well.

In September, our League hosted a consensus meeting wherein we heard from proponents of the referendum proposing city workers in Bloomington receive a "living wage," as well as Tom Hamilton, City Manager of Bloomington, who explained the costs and issues involved in doing so. After listening to both sides of the debate, League members engaged in thoughtful dialog and rendered a consensus position indicating our League is in favor of the Living Wage Referendum. Many thanks to League members Carol Reitan and Gwen Pruyne who represented our League on the Living Democracy Committee which resulted in our co-sponsorship of candidate forums featured in the "Town and Gown" series of candidate forums (11th & 15th Congressional districts) held at Illinois State University and Illinois Wesleyan University. We remained active in educating the public on current issues voters will need to consider in November. For example, we've spoken to local Rotary and Kiwanis clubs on the topics of Living Wage and the proposed Constitutional Convention. League members have given interviews on our League's positions on these two issues on WHOI TV and on radio via WGLT and WJBC.

Laurie Bergner participated in a forum on voter education issues hosted by a group active at Illinois State University, Feminist Led Activist Movement to Empower (FLAME), wherein the main topic involved empowering people to vote—something we were more than happy to endorse! On October 21st, our League is leading a discussion on "Voting 101" at Heartland Community College. We'll educate first-time voters on what to expect at the polling place (voting requirements) and in the ballot box (via Voter Guides published by National League as well as our own League).

We've remained active in traditional Voter Services activities as well. Many thanks to Judy Poultney, Julie Prandi, and Phylis VerSteegeh for registering voters at the Normal Public Library. Gwen Pruyne and Jeanne Morris organized the student vote effort at University High School. And finally, as mentioned previously in these pages, our League is justifiably proud of the publication of our first Voters' Guide. Our Judicial Voting Guide has been widely praised. Its publication was a true team effort, headed by Laurie Bergner, who received enormous help from many committee members over the course of the last year such as Becky Foley, Phylis VerSteegeh, Joni Painter, Julie Sullivan, Bill Allison, Beverly Poole and Sally Rudolph. However, I'd like to single out a few people who were instrumental in proofing, editing, and formatting our final product—so a very special thank you goes out to committee members Dianne Williamson and Madonna Wilkins. We've mailed a copy to our entire membership and we urge you to share this information with your family, friends, and co-workers.

If you haven't already visited it, I urge you to check out www.Vote411.org. This website, published by the National League of Women Voters, is a wonderful source of information on candidates, early voting, voting regulations, and ballot measures. Unsure about where your polling place is located? Go to this site, enter your address, and you'll be directed to the proper polling place. That's just one of the many features of this wonderful site.

Wishing you all the best in this busy season as we approach a climactic Presidential election.
Remember: Vote 411!

Sincerely,

Maureen

Presented by the League of Women Voters
Co-sponsored by the ISU Student Chapter of the
National Agri-Marketing Association (ISU-NAMA)

What's On Our Dinner Plate?

'How farming drives politics and politics drives farming'

Wednesday, November 12 – 7:00 p.m.
ISU's Bone Student Center – 3rd floor East Lounge
(Note the change of date and venue)

Alan Guebert, who writes a weekly agriculture column for *The Pantagraph*, and **Dennis Vercler**, Director of News and Communications for the Illinois Farm Bureau, will square off for a fascinating program on how farming and food affect politics and our lives.

Here we are in McLean County, part of the Heartland of America, surrounded by some of the richest farmland in the country. Yet how many of us really understand how farming, business and politics intersect? Guebert contends that farming affects politics even more than the military! As he notes, we can't be good citizens unless we understand the politics of farming.

What should make this program particularly interesting is that the two distinguished speakers have many opposing viewpoints. Guebert writes as an independent columnist, while Vercler represents farmers.

Alan Guebert began his syndicated agricultural column, *The Farm and Food File*, in June '93. It now appears weekly in more than 70 newspapers throughout the US and Canada. He also writes "Letter from America," a monthly column on U.S. agriculture and ag policy for magazines and newspapers in Europe and Asia. In 1997, the American Agricultural Editors' Association honored him with its highest awards, "Writer of the Year" and "Master Writer."

Dennis Vercler, 59, is Director of News and Communications with the Bloomington-based Illinois Farm Bureau. His division contains 23 staff professionals and operates with a communications budget of roughly \$5.8 million. Dennis is publisher of the 80,000-reader *FarmWeek* newspaper and a new 330,000-reader magazine, *Partners*, designed for non-farmer members of IFB. He also manages the 80-station radio network of the organization, the RFD Illinois Radio Network.

We hope you will all be able to attend

this very special program!
As usual, it is free and open to the public.

LWV Observers

If you're interested in learning what goes on at school boards, there remains three openings for League observers –

District 87 School Board – one opening
4th Wednesday of the month at 6:30 p.m.

Unit 5 School Board – two openings
2nd & 4th Wednesdays of the month at 7:00 p.m.

Please contact observer chair, Julie Sullivan,
309/663-4425 or email JulianaLou@aol.com.

Welcome to 2007-2008 Observers

This year, several members have volunteered to be League observers. They will attend board and council meetings, watching government in action and serving as eyes and ears of the League in our community. Please welcome the following 2007-08 League observers:

Pam Lubeck	District 87 School Board
Joni Painter	McLean County Board
Jana Edge	Normal Town Council
Ken Berk	Normal Town Council
Carol Baker	Bloomington City Council
Phylis VerSteegh	Bloomington City Council
Judy Poultney	Heartland Community College

Spotlight on New LWV Members

Jack Porter grew up in Evanston and Winnetka, IL. A graduate of Oberlin College, he also has advanced degrees from McCormick Theological Seminary and the University of Illinois College of Law. He's been in Bloomington since 1963, is a former pastor and staff attorney at Prairie State Legal Services. Jack is active with the Central Illinois Organizing Project.

Steve Stockton retired in 2004 as Vice President of Strategic Resources at State Farm to run a successful campaign for mayor of Bloomington. He has MBA and JD degrees from Northwestern and a CPA from University of Illinois.

Bob Warfield is a retired professor of criminal justice at the University of Wisconsin at Platteville. He's been in Bloomington since 2001, is a master gardener and is retiring as chair of Central Illinois chapter of ACLU.

Address Changes

Christina Rogers
18864 Valley Court
Bloomington, IL 61704
(309) 378-2138

Charline Watts
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Bloomington, IL 61701
(309) 664-0838

Of potential interest to Leaguers...**McLean County Bar Association is pleased to announce
the return of the Peoples' Law School on October 25, 2008!**

Co-sponsored by the Illinois State Bar Association, the general public is provided a unique opportunity to learn how the legal system works and how individuals and businesses may use the laws to protect and advance their interests.

Saturday, October 25th – 7:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. – ISU College of Business Building*

<u>Time</u>	<u>Room</u>	<u>Topic/ Speaker</u>	<u>Room</u>	<u>Topic / Speaker</u>
7:30	Atrium	Continental breakfast / Welcome		
8:00	148	Starting a Small Business – John Pratt	149	Traffic / DUI Law – LeeAnn Hill
9:00		Break		
9:15	148	Bankruptcy – Jonathan Backman	149	Expungements – Terry Dodds
10:15		Break		
10:30	148	Wills & Trusts – Timothy Leighton	149	Family Law – Jon McCloughlin
11:30	Atrium	Light Lunch		
12:00	139	Keynote topic: The Rule of Law & Violence Protection – McLean County Circuit Judge Charles Reynard		
1:00	139	Adjourn/Concluding Remarks		

*College of Business Building is located on the Quad, east of University Street and north of Beaumont. Parking Available; Enter Campus from University Street just north of where Dale Street ends.

For additional information, please contact Pablo Eves, Assistant States Attorney, (309) 888-5400

2009 LWVIL Convention**Paradise Hotel in East Peoria – June 12-14, 2009**

Jean Sanger and Cheryl Budzinski, chairs of the Convention Local Committee, are requesting Leaguers interested in assisting them and/or taking volunteer shifts to contact them.

LWVIL Convention Volunteer Needs

Hospitality Welcome people; give directions for hotel/convention registration, workshops, decorations, etc.

Registration Help staff with registration of delegates, alternates and visitors.

Credentials Keep track of the official count of delegates, alternates, board, visitors and guests. The chair reports these numbers to the convention each session.

Silent Auction/Pubs & Wares Assist staff and committee in setting up, monitoring, and collecting payments for silent auction and pubs and wares exhibits.

Pages and Floaters Assist Executive Director and President; deliver messages, float as needed.

Plenary Session Volunteers

Doorkeepers Admit persons to plenary sessions; check proper seating of delegates, alternates and visitors; distribute material; keep doors closed during votes.

Microphone monitors Assist at floor mikes, record speaker's name and LWV.

Timekeepers/Tellers Keep time for motions, etc. Assist with card counts and/or a contested election.

Laptop/Power Point Projector Operator Project motions on screen from laptop/Power Point projector; need to type motions.

LWVIL Convention Local Arrangements Committee Responsibilities

- Recruit/train/supervise and recognize volunteers; recruit from own and neighboring LWVs to fill volunteer time slots during the convention weekend. Actual numbers of volunteers and time slots needed will be determined based the convention schedule and other needs. More volunteers add to the friendliness and helpfulness displayed to the delegates and visitor which makes a more pleasing experience for those attending.
- Contact business leaders, e.g. chambers of commerce, convention and tourism office, and local businesses to provide things like discount coupons, favors, information on the area which can be given to delegates and visitors and provide information for mailings
- Contact civic leaders, e.g. Contact with the mayor or city manager of the site community to provide a personal welcome on the first day of plenary sessions. Civic leaders might be invited to attend the non-business parts of the convention
- Provide hospitality and decorations to support the theme (within the budget available)
- Contact media to encourage covering the convention and providing publicity in local papers/TV/radio

For additional information, please contact Cheryl Budzinski at (309) 253-9594 or e-mail: c_budzinski@hotmail.com

LWV Position on Living Wage

The League of Women Voters of McLean County has taken a position in favor of the nonbinding referendum to pay all City of Bloomington employees a living wage of \$9.81 an hour, with future cost of living increases.

This wage is based on the ability of a full-time employee to afford a one-bedroom apartment in Bloomington.

The following information will explain why we took this position.

The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan organization, takes positions on referenda based on good governance. What exactly is good governance? In this case, we believe that good governance includes paying government employees a living wage so that individuals who work for the city should be able to live in that city. We recognize that this is an issue of priorities. There are many things that a city has to consider in its decisions regarding how to spend its money, which is of course, taxpayers' money. But we believe that paying a living wage is a quality of life issue that has as high or higher priority than other quality of life issues that the city supports. The total cost to bring all workers' pay to a living wage is less than .5% of the total \$77 million budget.

We also believe that paying a living wage is good business. Workers who are paid a living wage stay longer on the job, reducing the cost of training new employees. Their morale is higher, resulting in higher quality work. And they save the city money in other ways. No full-time worker should have to turn to the government for food stamps; no full-time worker should have to turn to the government for Township relief; no full-time worker should have to turn to the government for housing for the homeless. Finally, paying a living wage is good for families. Parents who can survive on one or two jobs can spend more time with their children, reducing family disruption.

Bloomington City Manager Tom Hamilton, speaking for the City of Bloomington, noted that some of the employees who would receive increased pay, if the city paid a living wage to all employees, are teenagers and other youth who are lifeguards, as well as seniors who are crossing guards. He noted that none of them need the extra money to pay for basic necessities. This is the same argument that was used to keep wages for women below that of men for so many years, wages that have still not caught up today! The assumption that women's wages were secondary to men's, a second salary to enhance the real breadwinner's salary, was often incorrect. And it may be just as incorrect to assume that lifeguards are spending their money on CD's, or that crossing guards are working in order to see their grandchildren every day, as Hamilton suggested.

We believe that wages should not be paid according to the employee's need, but rather according to the job. A good hour's work should get a good hour's pay. The dignity of work should be preserved and validated by paying a living wage.

If the minimum wage had kept up with inflation, it would have truly been a living wage, and this referendum would not be necessary. But the minimum wage, which reached the maximum real value in 1968, has gone substantially down ever since. It has only recently been increased again after a devastating 10-year period in which no increases were made to the living wage and real value decreased dramatically. But it still has not reached a living wage.

Finally, it needs to be emphasized that the referendum is for City of Bloomington employees only, NOT for private business. Central Illinois Organizing Project, which is behind the referendum, has clarified many times that they have no intention of pushing for any ordinance to affect private business; they are concerned only with what our local government pays its workers. That is the only issue on the ballot.

Over 140 communities across America have passed living wage referenda. They have put their money where their mouth is: we know that their communities believe in paying fair wages, living wages, to their workers. What kind of community do we want OUR community to be?

Your vote on this referendum is a vote on what kind of community you want your community to be.



**THE LEAGUE
OF WOMEN VOTERS**
OF McLEAN COUNTY

Non-Profit
Organization
U.S. POSTAGE
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Normal, Illinois
Permit No. 37

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Bulletin

November 2008

I would like to extend a special "thank you" to Laurie Bergner... for her efforts in leading the committee responsible for the creation of our League's first **Guide for Judicial Elections**. Behind the scenes Laurie spent countless hours researching model voter guides, seeking assistance on how to create and implement a League-grown evaluation tool and working with vendors to help assemble the data we collected. Some ideas worked better than others, and through the creativity and exploration Laurie engaged in as we created our League's first Voter Guide, we're now in a much better position to know how to efficiently move forward in creating future Voter Guides. Again, please share this Guide widely; judicial elections are among the most critical we engage in, but all too often, are the ones about which voters know the least concerning the candidates. On behalf of the McLean County LWW Board and members, thanks, Laurie, for your many efforts—large and small—and the excellent leadership you demonstrated in moving us from vision to reality. *Submitted by Maureen O'Keefe*

Our **Guide for Judicial Elections '08** was printed and distributed to the five counties in our judicial district thanks to a fantastic committee:

**Laurie Bergner, Attorney Bill Allison, Judge Becky Foley
Maureen O'Keefe, Joni Painter, Beverly Poole, Sally Rudolph,
Julie Sullivan, Phylis VerSteegh, Dianne Williamson.**

And a very special thanks to **Madonna Wilkins** whose graphic design expertise made it look so professional. You gave the committee's great and informative guide real "pizzazz!" *Submitted by Dianne Williamson*

Thursday, October 30th – 7:00 p.m.
McLean County Government Center
Front & East Streets (Use Front Street entrance)

Voting in America

**Speakers: Professor Lane Crothers, ISU
Professor Kathleen Montgomery, IWU**

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Wednesday, November 12th – 7:00 p.m.
ISU Bone Student Center 3rd Floor East Lounge

What's On Our Dinner Plate?

**'How farming drives politics
and politics drives farming'**

Speakers: Alan Guebert & Dennis Vercler

Co-sponsored by ISU Student Chapter
National Agri-Marketing Assoc. (ISU-NAMA)

Details – Page 3

Tuesday, January 27th, 2009 – 7:00 p.m.

Venue to be announced

What the Next President Needs to Know about Intelligence

Speaker: Melvin Goodman

