



THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
OF McLEAN COUNTY

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of McLean County Bulletin
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**The official address of the
League of Women Voters
is 1918 Owens Drive
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**New web site!
www.lwvmclean.org**

**LWVIL – www.lwvil.org
LWVUS – www.lwv.org**



LWV 2009-2010 PROGRAM SCHEDULE

September 22, 2009 • Unitarian Universalist Church
75th Anniversary Party and Membership Event
(RSVP by September 15 • Reservation form inside)

September 29, 2009 • Normal Public Library
What The Hell Is Wrong with Illinois State Government?

October 6, 2009 • McLean County Government Center
**Election Commission Study:
Program and Consensus Meeting**

October 20, 2009 • Venue to be announced
Health Care: National and Local Issues

November 18, 2009 • Illinois State University
**International Intervention in Humanitarian Crises:
Balancing Nations' Sovereign Power and Human Rights**
Gillian Martin Sorensen, Senior Advisor at the UN Foundation

January 26, 2010 • Venue to be announced
**Community Justice Committee:
What's New in McLean County**

February 23, 2010 • Venue to be announced
**Terrorism and Peace Prospects:
Pakistan, India, Kashmir**

April 15, 2010 • **Annual Dinner** • Eastland Suites

April 27, 2010 • Venue to be announced
What's Happening with Higher Education in Illinois?

May 25, 2010 • **Annual Meeting** • Venue to be announced

From the desk of . . . Co-Presidents Julie Sullivan and Maureen O'Keefe

Dear League Members,

It's 2009, but we're inviting you to party like it's 1933!

On September 22, we plan to celebrate the McLean County League's 75th Anniversary with a special evening for past, present and future League members and friends.

Please join us, and invite your friends and family also, as we remember where we've been and look towards where we're going. We'll even raise a toast with wine, since we no longer have to worry about the Volstead Act.

The coming League year promises to be exciting. Our monthly programs will address Local, State and National issues of interest to League members. This year, we will hold a local consensus on election issues and begin a study of local land use practices. We'll have observers watching local government and we'll take part in actions to support LWVIL and LWVUS program positions. Through Voters' Service we'll encourage citizens to register to vote and to learn about candidates. The Voter newsletter will continue to keep Leaguers up-to-date on League activities and projects.

The League of Women Voters of McLean County has been successful for 75 years because our members believe in bettering our community, state and country through League. I encourage you to continue this effort – ask a friend to join League (and renew your membership); volunteer for a short, or longer term, project; attend and participate in the League meetings and programs.

Together, we'll make the next 75 years as vital as the past 75.

Julie

In Memoriam . . .

Donna F. Schiller – 1927-2009

Donna Schiller, 81, former president of League of Women Voters of Illinois and political activist, died of natural causes June 4, 2009, in Tucson, Arizona, where she and her husband, Donald, recently deceased, had moved from Highland Park, five years ago.

Mrs. Schiller was elected president of LWVIL in 1973 after many years with the Highland Park league. An experienced lobbyist in Springfield and Chicago, she pressed for passage of the Equal Rights Amendment and advocated Merit Selection of judges. She led the League's efforts to push the controversial ERA, a hot-button issue in the 1970s that was never ratified in Illinois. Jan Otwell, Mrs. Schiller's successor as LWVIL president, said she was very passionate about selecting Judges by merit, rather than popular election.

Dawn Clark Netsch, former state senator and comptroller remembered Mrs. Schiller as "the kind of activist you'd like to have more of."

Mrs. Schiller is survived by one son, two daughters and six grandchildren.

FLORENCE FIFER BOHRER AWARD

Call for Nominations

The Bohrer Award is presented annually to recognize outstanding civic contributions by an individual. Recipients of the Bohrer award may be League members or non-League members who have contributed significantly to the betterment of the community.

Nominations for this year's Bohrer Award will close Friday, September 4, 2009 and the award will be presented at the 75th anniversary celebration on September 22. If you are interested in nominating someone for the Bohrer Award, submit a brief biography focusing on non-League community contributions and achievements, give reasons why you think the person is deserving of the Award, provide contact information for the nominee and provide contact information for yourself.

Send nominations or questions about the Bohrer award to: Julie Sullivan

107 Warner St., Bloomington, IL 616701 - or- JulianaLou@aol.com

Help Wanted: Observers

An honored tradition of League of Women Voters of McLean County is the League Observer Corps. League observers learn about local government, become involved in the community and perform a valuable service for the League.

- Observers monitor:
- McLean County Board
 - Bloomington City Council
 - Normal Town Council
 - Unit 5 School Board
 - District 87 School Board
 - Heartland Community College Board meetings

Once a year, observers report to the membership in a newsletter article and bring important items to League Board for consideration, as appropriate.

The time commitment is minimal and no experience is necessary. Information packets are provided and the Observer Chair is always available to help. For more information, please contact: Observer Chair, Judie Bey
judiebey@juno.com

309-662-1774 309-826-1774-cell

Become the eyes and ears of the League.

Become a League observer.

True Census Count: League Leadership Opportunity

The next U.S. census will be April 2010.

Data from the census is used by the Federal Government to distribute more than \$400 billion annually to State and Local Governments and to ensure that seats in U.S. House of Representatives are fairly and equitably apportioned.

Both LWVUS and LWVIL support an accurate census and both have census projects underway to make sure that citizens are fully and securely counted during Census 2010 and that the redistricting process which follows is open and transparent. Our League has the opportunity to participate in the census project. We're looking for League members who are interested in taking part in or leading a True Census Count Committee for McLean County.

If you would like to be part of this project, please contact: Julie Sullivan
309-663-4425 julianalou@aol.com

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF McLEAN COUNTY – *Inclusion Statement*

The League of Women Voters of McLean County, in both its values and practices, is committed to inclusion and diversity. This means that the League will attempt to minimize barriers to participation in any activity of the League on the basis of economic position, gender, race, creed, age, sexual orientation, national origin, or disability.

We recognize that diverse perspectives are important and necessary for responsible and representative decision making. We believe inclusiveness enhances the organization's ability to respond more effectively to changing conditions and needs.

We affirm our commitment to reflecting the diversity of McLean County, Illinois.

Adopted August 18, 2009

HEALTHCARE REFORM AND THE LEAGUE

Most Americans agree the current United States' healthcare system is sick. They certainly don't agree on the cure or on legislative 'doctors' finding a non-partisan remedy.

There is a lot of quackery and false information floating around which threatens to overwhelm reasoned, rational discussion.

League is one of the voices for non-partisan, unbiased information on this complex issue.

The LWVUS position on healthcare is to "promote a health care system for the United States that provides access to a basic level of quality care for all U.S. residents and controls health care costs."

As part of the League's effort to provide accurate information on this complex issue, LWVUS has an extensive healthcare section on its website (lww.org) and there is also information at the LWVIL website (lwwil.org).

However, League's efforts cannot be confined to the national level. A traditional strength of League is grassroots action. It's critical for individual citizens to make their voices heard.

In spite of the rhetoric, we have the same goal: to live in a healthy country with healthcare available to all.

Submitted by Julie Sullivan

What can you do?

- **Write a letter to the editor or contact your legislators (as a concerned individual, not as a League spokesperson).**
- **Become involved in other local groups for healthcare reform, such as "Campaign for Better Healthcare."**
- **Bring your ideas for how our League can take action to co-presidents Julie Sullivan or Maureen O'Keefe to take to the League Board.**

The following article is from the LWVUS Health Care Task Force...

Quick Facts on Health Care Costs

- Total health spending in the U.S. reached \$2.1 trillion in 2007 – or \$7,026 per capita.
- By 2016, total health spending is projected to rise to \$4.2 trillion.
- Between 2005 and 2006, total health spending increased 6.7%; more than double the rate of the 2.9% increase in overall economic growth.
- Total health spending remained relatively constant at about 16% of gross domestic product from 2003 – 2006, but is projected to increase to 19.5% by 2017.
- Spending for home health care increased at a faster pace from 2005 – 2006 (9.9%) than any other category of health spending; however, its impact is limited because it accounts overall for only 2.5% of total health spending.
- Yearly prescription drug spending growth accelerated in 2006 to 8.5% from a low of 5.8% in 2005, in part because of full implementation of Medicare Part D.
- Between 2006 and 2007, premiums for health coverage offered by employers increased 6.1%, the fourth straight year of declines in the rate of premium growth, from a peak of 13.9% in 2003. Even so, this was more than twice the rate of growth in the Consumer Price Index.
- Of every dollar spent on health services in the U.S. in 2006, 46 cents came directly from government sources.

A series of up-to-date articles addressing Health Care Reform will be included in upcoming issues of The Voter of McLean County and may be found on the LWVUS website: www.lww.org

ELECTION COMMISSION STUDY: Program & Consensus Meeting

October 6, 2009, 7:00 – 9:00 p.m. ▪ McLean County Government Center

Consensus: Collective opinion of a substantial number of League members, representative of the membership as a whole, after objective study of an issue.

From 7:00 to 8:00 p.m., members of the Election Study Group will outline problems in Registration and Voting encountered in their 2008 Election Survey of McLean County and present recommendations to improve the system. -- **All citizens of the community are invited** -- The full report, more detailed pro and con arguments, and a list of recommendations can be accessed by contacting the Study Group Chair, Julie Prandi at jprandi@iwu.edu.

From 8:00 to 9:00 p.m., the two questions below will be discussed for League members to debate. League Consensus will be taken at the end of this second part of the meeting.

McLean County has two election authorities:

- **City of Bloomington Board of Elections Commission (BEC)** for Bloomington only
- **County Clerk's Office (CC)** for Town of Normal and the rest of the county

If there is consensus favoring a single election authority, there are two different ways to do it – (ILCS Article 6A). The first step in both cases is to reject the law establishing BEC by a Bloomington city referendum. If no further action is taken, CC will take over all the business of BEC.

If the Bloomington referendum passes, it is also possible to establish a **County Election Commission (CEC)**. CEC requires either a vote by the County Board or the passing of an additional referendum in McLean County. If a CEC were established, our County would still have an elected County Clerk and CC would retain all of its other duties (such as taxes and records).

Consensus Question #1:

Should the law establishing the City of Bloomington Board of Elections Commission (BEC) be rejected so that McLean County, including the City of Bloomington, will from that time forward have one single election authority for all its citizens?

Pro: This would end confusion for voters as to where to go to register or write to for an absentee ballot; and eliminate delays for processing address changes within our county. The current system of two election authorities is wasteful and inefficient. Consolidating would be cheaper in the long run.

Con: Bloomington likes having a separate election authority and won't vote for abolishing it. Voters can easily check registration status before elections to avoid problems at the polls. No big saving is to be had by consolidating election authorities. The County cannot afford the transition costs to consolidate.

Consensus Question #2:

Provided the referendum rejecting the law that established BEC passes, should a McLean County Election Commission be established in lieu of the McLean County Clerk's Office (CC) becoming the election authority?

Pro: In CC, but not at BEC, there have been problems with election judge training and long delays in processing voter registrations or address changes. The other jobs performed at CC (taxes, records) detract from time and expertise required for election issues. Whereas a sitting County Clerk has to campaign every four years for office while serving as supervisor of elections (a potential conflict of interest), he or she can also be elected without having any expertise relevant to running elections. By contrast, the administrator who heads a CEC would have to present relevant credentials and be hired by the Election Commissioners (2 Republicans and 1 Democrat), who are appointed by the County Board Chairman. The cost benefit for a CEC would be as great as or greater than consolidation in CC (greater expertise of entire staff in elections; less overtime needed).

Con: Being able to elect the person in charge of elections safeguards the voters' right to choose; appointed officials are not as responsive to voter pressure. Nationwide, every election authority has a small percentage of voters who have registration problems. CC may be a little understaffed, and addressing that issue could improve its performance. County Clerks all over Illinois supervise elections where they also run for office and those counties seem to think this system works fine. The League of Women Voters has always been against adding extra governmental bodies; the CC plus a CEC would increase the number of McLean County governmental agencies. More savings are to be had by consolidating under CC than by moving to a CEC (salaries for a CEC Executive Director and Election Commissioners would not be needed). On the other hand, if we went for a CEC there would still be a County Clerk with the same salary as now.

“Everyone Counts...On League and In League” – LWVIL STATE CONVENTION

Illinois League of Women Voters held its biennial convention June 12-14, 2009 in East Peoria.

Our League’s nine delegates attended workshops ranging from action issues to the nuts and bolts of making League work, represented McLean County in the business sessions and took part in caucuses and conversations with League members from around the state.

Highlights of the weekend included:

- Review of LWVIL activities over the past 2 years
- Adoption of action and program focuses for 2010-2011
- Will of the Convention motions, asking the Governor and General Assembly to act in accord with League positions.

Looking Back: 2007-2009 in Review

In 2007, League authorized a study and consensus about the need for a State Constitutional Convention. The outcome of the consensus was that the LWVIL board adopted a position opposing the call to convention.

A major focus of the past two years has been State Fiscal Policy and School Funding. LWVIL, A+ Illinois, and Better Funding for Better Schools have partnered to encourage the Governor and General Assembly to change the way the State raises revenue and to spend more money on public schools.

LWVIL has also been active in supporting State League positions on:

- Campaign Finance Reform / Ethics
 - Children’s & Juvenile Services
 - Gun Violence Prevention
 - Criminal Justice
 - Death Penalty Abolition
 - Health Care
 - Immigration
 - Mental Health
 - Social Policy
 - Natural Resources
- Voters’ Service activities focused on younger voters. LWVIL received a federal grant to support registering eligible high schools students, encouraging qualified juniors and seniors to become election judges, and conducting mock elections.

Looking Forward: Program and Projects 2010-2011

LWVIL readopted all current program positions with an editorial clarification to the Gun Violence Prevention Position. The convention also approved forming a committee to update the League position on Recall and Term Limits.

LWVIL adopted advocacy or project focuses on:

Fiscal Policy & Tax Reform

League's position is that Illinois must raise the income tax, broaden the sales tax to include services, and provide property tax relief. League supports changes to the tax system to make the tax burden more progressive by increasing deductions and credits for lower income residents. The League stresses that the structural fiscal deficit which the State has carried for many years is unacceptable.

Campaign Finance & Ethics Reform

The League, in coalition with numerous organizations, will work to pass ethics and campaign finance legislation that will identify contribution limits, require full, immediate disclosure of all contributions and provide

enforcement and monitoring mechanisms to assure transparency. The goal is to "take the money out of politics in Illinois."

True Census Count 2010 and Redistricting Reform

League will promote full participation of all Illinois residents in the 2010 Census. To achieve this, League will work with a broad based coalition to achieve a full count. Because Census 2010 count impacts the number of Congressional Districts and the amount of Federal dollars returned to the State, the League will work to assure a redistricting process that is timely, orderly and meets the requirements of the 1965 U.S. Voting Rights Act and subsequent amendments.

Judicial Performance Evaluation

In 2007, the LWVIL convention voted to establish a citizen education project to define and investigate the use of a non-partisan judicial evaluation commission to rate judicial candidates and share results with voters.

The committee, co-chaired by Laurie Bergner, has taken steps to define what a judicial evaluation commission is, how it might function in Illinois, and what must happen before proposed legislation is introduced into the General Assembly.

LWVUS advocacy focuses for the coming year are Global Climate Change and Healthcare Reform.

Will of Convention:

Delegates passed three Will of the Convention motions calling for LWVIL Board action, including communicating with elected officials.

Fiscal Policy & Tax Reform

A call for the Governor and the General Assembly to restore the state's fiscal health and to provide for Illinois' future as outlined in LWVIL's position.

Campaign Finance & Ethics Reform

Although a campaign finance reform bill was passed in May 2009, League believes this bill is flawed because it fails to provide clear definitions of the provisions, including reasonable transfer limits, consistent effect on corporations, PACs and individuals, thus continuing the dependence on party leadership; it continues to diminish the ability of new candidates to compete on an equal financial

Illinois Student Vote 2010 (Mock Election)
LWVIL has applied for a grant to continue the Illinois Student Vote project for the 2010 elections. Illinois Student Vote gives high school students the opportunity to use actual voting equipment to cast ballots.

basis with incumbents; and it does not take effect until January 2011, after the 2010 General Election.

LWVIL calls on the Governor and General Assembly to lower the campaign finance limits to the federal level and treat transfers and in-kind contributions from other candidates or multi-candidate committees on the same basis; apply limits to each election cycle rather than to each calendar year, as well as limit to one the number of political committees a public official can create.

Gun Control

LWVIL encourages Governor Quinn to veto HB 182, a bill that would change Illinois law governing the concealed carry of handguns and allow a person to carry concealed handguns into another person's home.

Submitted 7/2/09

***A Story from League History . . .* OBSERVERS: "The Eyes and Ears of the League"**

Presently, there is a lot of talk about transparency in government. Almost from its establishment, our League has had Observers at meetings of elected governmental units. However, before there were Open Meetings laws, some of these units seemed to operate with a hidden agenda. Obviously, many of the votes were based upon discussions that had taken place beyond the public's view. And this was especially true of the McLean County Board.

In the 1960s, we learned that about a hundred County Board committee meetings had been held in one year. Our conjecture was that these committees were meeting frequently, without conducting significant amounts of business, so that members would receive per diem and travel expenses. After the "Sunshine Laws" were enacted, a group of Leaguers began to attend committee meetings, but Observers were not always welcome. Primarily, the presence of women caused the "Old Boys Club" some problems. We were told that oftentimes members met in the Men's Room so that the League's Observer could not hear what was being said.

Once, an Observer telephoned me to ask if I would take care of her four children if she was arrested at a county Board committee meeting. My response was, "Oh, Margaret, DON'T GO!" She went, and she was not arrested.

Observing is an excellent way to learn the workings of Government. And today, League Observers are always welcome.

Submitted by Gwen Pruyne



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

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

Find inside:

- 75th Anniversary Reservation Form
- 2009-10 LWV Program Schedule
- Bohrer Award Nomination Request
- LWV Inclusion Statement
- Healthcare Reform article
- Election Commission Program and Consensus Meeting information
- State Convention Report
- A Story from League History
- Volunteer opportunities:
 League Observer Corps
 Census Count Committee



Labor Day Parade
Monday • September 7th • 10am
Bloomington

Ride or walk in the Labor Day Parade for League of Women Voters.

Several members will be participating... Thanks, ladies, and the more the merrier!!

We will have a pickup truck so you can ride the whole way, part of the way or walk.

The route is short...it ends at Miller Park. The parade begins at Front and Center Sts. ... you'll need to be there by 9:30am.

We'll be handing out candy, information about our September 22nd Anniversary Party and generally spreading good will!

Give me a call if you have questions. Hope you can join us and help show off our League as active and engaged!!

Rose Marsaglia 309-275-7900

**Notice to Candidates for
General Primary Election –
February 2, 2010**

McLean County, IL –

McLean County Clerk, Peggy Ann Milton, announced that the first day to circulate for the October 26 - November 2, 2009 filing period was August 4, 2009.

Petition filing packets are available at the McLean County Clerk's office.

Note: No petitions will be accepted after 5:00 pm on the last day of filing.

The 2010 Candidates Guide is available on the State Board of Elections website:

<http://www.elections.il.gov/ElectionInformation/welcome.aspx>

**Contact: Linda Shriver
Elections Administrator
309-888-5191**