



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

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**League of Women Voters
of McLean County Bulletin
is published 8 times a year.**

**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**

The Voter

Vol. 76 No. 4 of McLean County Dec - Jan 2010

Monday • January 11, 2010 • 7:00 p.m.
Interstate Center

McLean County Clerk CANDIDATES' FORUM

Co-Sponsored by: **McLean County Farm Bureau,
Interstate Center and ISU Senior Professionals**

Moderator: **Yadira Ruiz**
LWV of McLean County Voter Chair

Candidates: **Peggy Ann Milton, incumbent
Mike McFarland
Kathy Michael
Geoffrey Tompkins**

Tuesday • January 26, 2010 • 7:00 p.m.
ISU Bone Student Center • Old Main Room

THE POLITICS OF ILLINOIS HIGHER EDUCATION Funding, Curriculum, and Public Demands

Co-Sponsored by:
ISU College Student Personnel Administration Group
Details on Page 3

Tuesday • February 23, 2010 • 7:00 p.m.
ISU Bone Student Center • Old Main Room

TERRORISM AND PEACE PROSPECTS Pakistan, India and Kashmir

Thursday • April 15, 2010 • 6:00 p.m.
Eastland Suites

ANNUAL DINNER and AUCTION

Eastland Suites
Speaker: **Frank Mackaman, Dirksen Center**

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

Dear League Members,

As you read this newsletter, it's probable that you are involved in the hustle and bustle of the Holiday Season and looking forward to the events of a New Year.

Our League has several exciting activities planned for the first part of 2010 and you're invited to take part. In addition to outstanding monthly programs, we plan to:

- Take action on our position to establish a single County-wide Election Commission for McLean County
- Host two visitors from Colombia during April
- Throw another party at our annual Fundraiser on April 15
- Establish a Court watching group
- Encourage full participation in the 2010 Census
- Continue participation in the Justice Coordinating Council
- Sponsor a candidates' forum for County Clerk
- Co-sponsor an International Women's Day Breakfast in March
- Begin a new study on land use in McLean County.

2010 promises to be an active, productive League year. As you make your New Year's resolutions, please consider adding League activity to your list. League succeeds because our members are involved and interested. We couldn't do it without you.

. . . Julie

LWV of McLean County MEMBERSHIP

WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS

The following people
have recently joined the League

David & Anne Eaton Martha Everman
Mary Moran James Paar

DUES ARE DUE

Please remember that your 2009-2010
dues are now due.

If you haven't already paid, please send \$60,
payable to –

McLean County League of Women Voters
and mail to:

Membership Chair, Phylis VerSteegeh
49 Kenfield Circle, Bloomington 61704

Congratulations!

We were very pleased to see **Yadira Ruiz**,
LWV of McLean County Board Member and
Voter Service Chair, named by the Pantagraph
as a winner of the **20 Under 40** Program.

Yadira is recognized as one of 20 people under
the age of 40 who are

- making a difference in their communities
- achieving significant career accomplishments
- showing a likelihood of future success and
leadership.

Yadira is the director of the Stepping Stones
program at YWCA McLean County.

Congratulations, Yadira!

www.pantagraph.com/20under40

THE POLITICS OF ILLINOIS HIGHER EDUCATION: Funding, Curriculum, and Public Demands

Tuesday ▪ January 26, 2010 ▪ 7:00 p.m. ▪ ISU Bone Student Center ▪ Old Main Room

Co-sponsored by: ISU College Student Personnel Administration Group

Did you know –

- ▶ *State funding has decreased to a third of what it used to be?*
- ▶ *The public's demands on what the university offers has increased astronomically over the years?*
- ▶ *Why the proportion of administrative staff to professors has increased so much?"*

League of Women Voters of McLean County will present a program in January which will address the numerous ways that politics influences higher education in Illinois. We think you'll be surprised and fascinated by the changes in higher education over the last 20 years and how politics has influenced every part of those changes, from funding to curriculum. To help us understand our universities, we have four distinguished panelists:

Dr. Diane Dean is Assistant Professor for Higher Education Administration and Policy at Illinois State University. Her research and teaching focuses on college and university leadership, finance, planning and policy. Dr. Dean has been a Fellow with both the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education, and with the Association for Institutional Research/National Center for Education Statistics.

Dr. James Palmer teaches courses on the American community college, adult and continuing education, and the history of American higher education. He directs the Grapevine project (<http://www.grapevine.ilstu.edu/>), which tracks state tax appropriations for higher education, and is the editor of the Community College Review.

Jonathan Rosenthal has served as Associate Vice President of Admissions at Illinois State University since 2003. Before that, he served ISU in several capacities, rising from professor of Language, Literature and Cultures, to Assistant Chair of that department, then Associate Dean of Arts and Sciences, Director of General Education, and Registrar.

Debra K. Smitley is Associate Vice President for Finance and Planning, Illinois State University. Before joining ISU in 2004, she worked for the Illinois Board of Higher Education, which is the state's planning and coordinating board for higher education.

2010 LWVUS Advocacy Priorities: Time to Submit Your Suggestions

The LWVUS Board will be determining Advocacy Priorities for 2010 at the Board Meeting in late January. If you would like to submit suggestions, please send an email to jduffy@lww@aol.com by January 15. Please indicate whether your suggestion is submitted as an individual or the result of a committee or League meeting.

All suggested advocacy priority topics will be compiled into a report to the Board for consideration.

In Memoriam . . .

Sandra Scott – 1944-2009

Sandy joined our League in the late 1960s. She served on the Board of Directors and chaired several studies. When our League members appeared on a regular basis on radio station WJBC's problems and solutions program, Sandy was so effective she was hired by the station to continue the consumers' advocacy program and was given additional responsibilities as Administrative Assistant for the station.

In 1973, Sandy was elected to the McLean County Board and served a full term. Her interest in the mental health issue in League was continued when the Board was considering hiring a mental health coordinator. Re-elected for a second term, she resigned to work in the McLean County Department of Building and Zoning. League had advocated for county zoning for many years, so Sandy was a good choice for this position. Developers were not always happy about zoning because they were not free to do whatever they wanted. One developer told Sandy he would see that she was fired if she did not grant a variance he wanted. Sandy stood her ground in several controversial situations.

The Florence Fifer Bohrer Award was presented to Sandy at the 75th Anniversary Celebration.

Jerry VerSteegh – 1935-2009

Jerry VerSteegh, a member of the McLean County League of Women Voters, died at his home in Bloomington on November 1, 2009 from cancer. He fought a hard battle with the disease for almost five years. Jerry lived and worked in McLean County for over 25 years and retired from Growmark in 1995. He was a graduate of Iowa State University and spent his entire career in agricultural journalism.

Jerry is survived by his wife Phylis, a son, a daughter, two step-daughters, eight grandchildren, six great-grandchildren, other relatives and many friends.

We will all remember Jerry's endearing humor, acknowledging that he was never afraid to voice his opinions to any and all of us on any and all topics, and that he did things "my way."

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF MCLEAN COUNTY Nonpartisan and Political Activity Policy

Purpose: The purpose of the League of Women Voters is to promote political responsibility through informed and active participation of citizens in government. The League is a nonpartisan, political organization: nonpartisan in that it never supports or opposes any candidate for elective office or political party; political in that it does act on those governmental issues selected by its members and on which a position has been reached through study and member agreement.

Guidelines for Political Activity by Members:

- The League believes that participation in the activities of our political parties is an essential ingredient of citizen responsibility and urges members to support the party and candidates of their choice.
- No member shall undertake any activity which may constitute a public statement or partisan position which could be attributed to the League.
- A member may represent the League in the following activities (even if the League member has known political affiliations) so long as the member does not wear or present anything that would identify a party or position: registering voters, moderating candidate meetings or debates, or observing government meetings.
- The Co-President is the spokesperson for the League, but may designate a member to testify before government panels, to lobby, or to otherwise represent the League.
- A member may circulate and sign petitions, but not at a League meeting.
- The League membership roster is not to be made available for non-League use without Board approval.

Guidelines for Political Activity by High Profile Board Members: Board members holding a public high profile position: the President or Co-Presidents, VP: Action, VP: Program and Voter Service Chair may not undertake any action which would publicly identify them with partisan activity, such as:

- May not run for public or party office. A high visibility Board member who decides to run for public or party office shall resign from the Board. After the public or party election (regardless of the outcome), the Board member may return to the Board by appointment or election at the next McLean County League of Women Voters annual election.
- May not work as precinct committee person or other elected party official.
- May not engage in visible support of political candidates.
- May not solicit money for a candidate or party.
- May join a political party.
- May attend partisan functions for the purpose of becoming informed about candidates and issues.
- May work as an election judge or poll watcher.
- May be appointed to Boards, Commissions, Committees, or other offices, if that body is clearly nonpartisan. As a member of a Board, Commission or Committee, the Board member must act as an individual and may not speak for, or represent, the League.
- May not take leadership roles in groups connected with controversial issues, where a conflict with the League's position could occur.

Guidelines for Political Activity by Other Board Members: Political activities are permissible for members of the Board, if the activities do not create any doubt in the public's mind as to the nonpartisan nature of the League. Neither should such activities jeopardize the League's ability to deal with current issues. Board members should use discretion to ensure that their own activities are not identified with the League. Board members (other than high visibility Board members):

- May not run for partisan public office. A Board member who decides to run for partisan public office shall take a leave of absence from the Board. After the public election, the Board member may resume a Board position after the election (regardless of the outcome) for the remainder of the Board member's original term.
- May be candidates for nonpartisan public office.
- May be candidates for party office.
- May work as precinct committee person or other elected party official.
- May engage in visible support of political candidates.
- May host fundraisers, solicit money and contribute money to a candidate or party.
- May work as an election judge or poll watcher.
- May be appointed to Boards, Commissions, Committees and other offices. As a member of a Board, Commission or Committee, the Board member must act as an individual and may not speak for, or represent, the League.
- May take leadership roles in groups connected with controversial issues, even where a conflict with the League's position could occur.

Political Activities of a Spouse or Relative: The political activities of a spouse or relative of a Board member shall be considered separate and distinct from the activities of the member.

In situations not specifically covered in this policy statement, a three member Political Activity Policy Committee appointed by the Board of Directors may be called upon to make a recommendation to the full Board. The ultimate responsibility for interpretation of the policy rests with the Board of Directors.

This policy shall be reviewed annually by a three-person committee appointed by the Co-President and shall be approved by the Board of Directors of the League of Women Voters of McLean County.

(Updated November 10, 2009)

LWV of McLean County ▪ ELECTION STUDY 2008 ▪ Recommendations

In addition to the League consensus supporting a single election commission for McLean County, the Election Study group developed nine recommendations for improving election procedures. These issues are actionable under the LWVUS position on elections.

1. Voters should have a convenient way of verifying that they are registered to vote; and encouraged to check this before Election Day if they have moved, changed their name, or have registered to vote for the first time. CC voters can check their status on the County Clerk's website. All Illinois voters can now use the website for the Illinois Voter Registration System www.elections.state.il.us, which just came online in 2009. It would help to educate the public better about these options.
2. Voters are entitled to a notice of the disposition of their voter registration (incl. address changes) also when they have not registered successfully (National Voter Rights Act, NVRA). This is the current policy of CC and BEC. It is especially important for mail-in registrations.
3. A notice should be sent to the voter before certain purges are made. When a voter card is returned as undeliverable or with a forwarding address, the NVRA requires a notice to be sent to advise voters that their registration will become inactive unless they return a card in a separate envelope with an explanation. Further in NVRA: "if the registrant has changed residence to a place outside the registrar's jurisdiction... information concerning how the registrant can continue to be eligible to vote [should be sent]."
This is the current CC and BEC policy.
4. Driver's License Facility procedures for registering voters should be monitored for compliance with NVRA. The DLF is a crucial link in the voter registration process in McLean County.
5. All the public libraries in McLean County should have at least one person who is a deputy registrar. This should be advertised so that it begins to be common knowledge. Normal Public Library should imitate the program at Bloomington Public Library. A small sign at the information desk could indicate "Voters Registered Here."
6. Voter registration materials, not just name change forms, should be available at polling places on Election Day. People who are not casting provisional ballots and not on the registered voter list can be provided with mail-in forms so they can vote in the next election.
7. Election Judge Training: All election judges should be trained to redirect voters who come to the wrong polling place; to know when to assign a "federal ballot only" or a provisional ballot. Those not able to adequately do the job should retire; and judges should rotate jobs at the polling place.
8. Voting Supplies: Precincts or polling places that have a record of long lines need to be provided with adequate space and a sufficient number of voting stations on Election Day. An adequate number of voting machines needs to be supplied for off-site early voting.
9. Waiting at the Help Desk: CC Election judges should not have to call the central office as often or wait as long on the phone for information. The CC line in 2008 was very frequently busy, whereas BEC judges were able to resolve most issues without calling. Resources need to be provided to minimize calls; or new phone lines need to be opened.

Call for Volunteers: Election Study Action Committee

After the Election Study 2008 report was complete in October and the results presented to the community, it was time to draw up an action plan. That action plan, which we will be working on in 2010, has now been approved by our Board. The plan includes: monitoring the Driver's License Facility procedures for registering voters; enlisting city librarians all over McLean County as deputy registrars; monitoring Election Judge training; investigating the disposition of voter cards that are returned as undeliverable or with a forwarding address; and strategies to move towards the establishment of a County Election Commission.

If you would like to join our team, please notify the chair: Julie Prandi (jprandi@iwu.edu).

**VOTER REGISTRATION for the GENERAL PRIMARY ELECTION
on Tuesday, February 2, 2010 will close at 4:30 p.m. on Tuesday, January 5, 2010**

All persons who are or will be 18 years of age on or before the General Primary Election on February 2, 2010, and are not currently registered, and those who must change their names or addresses and wish to vote may register in person at:

- Board of Election Commissioners' Office, 115 E. Washington St. Room 403
- McLean County Clerk's Office – 115 E. Washington – Room 102 – Bloomington, IL

Hours for both offices are 8:00 am - 4:30 pm Monday to Friday.

Also on the following Saturdays in the Board of Election Commissioners' office only:
December 19, 26, 2009, January 2, 2010, 9:00-noon.

Voter registration is also during regular business hours at Blm Public Library – 205 E. Olive St.

Please bring 2 forms of identification:

1 with your name *and* current address; 1 with your name.

For more information, contact –

Board of Election Commissioners, 309-888-5136, www.becvote.org -or-
McLean County Clerk, 309-888-5191, www.mcleancountyil.gov/countyclerk.

Paul Shannon, Executive Director
Blm Board of Election Commissioners
115 E Washington St., Room 403
Bloomington, IL 61702-2400
Ph: 309-888-5136
pauls@becvote.org
www.becvote.org

PeggyAnn Milton, County Clerk
Office of McLean County Clerk
115 E Washington St., Room 102
Bloomington, IL 61702-2400
Ph: 309-888-5190
countyclerk@mcleancountyil.gov
www.mcleancountyil.gov/countyclerk

Linda Shriver, Election Administrator
Office of McLean County Clerk
115 E. Washington St., Room 102
Bloomington, IL 61702-2400
Ph: 309-888-5191
Fax (309)888-5932
www.mcleancountyil.gov/countyclerk

LWVIL to HOST CANDIDATE DEBATES for BOTH PARTIES

LWVIL has been asked to partner with ABC 7 and the Better Government Association to host debates for both Republican and Democratic candidates for the primary in both the Gubernatorial and Senatorial races. The debates are scheduled to be aired in January.

If you would like to **suggest questions for the candidates** or if you can serve as a helper for the debates, send an email to Jan Dorner, Voter Service VP, at voterservice@lwvil.org or phone Mo Ormiston in the League office. Check our website, www.lwvil.org, for the latest news on the televising and webcasting of the debates.

PROPOSED AMENDMENT on REDISTRICTING!

The LWVIL Board voted unanimously to support a Citizen Initiative on Redistricting:
Illinois Fair Map Amendment.

This proposed constitutional amendment would take redistricting out of the hands of the General Assembly, allow for public participation and input, create transparency, and provide a process that would make the once-every-decade map drawing process just and equitable.

Local Leagues will be asked to collect signatures on petitions
to get the proposed amendment on the November 2010 ballot,
educate our communities on why it is important to support this initiative,
and encourage others to support this effort as well.

We are aiming for 500,000 signatures. We can do it!



League of Women Voters
of Illinois

COMPREHENSIVE TAX REFORM FOR ILLINOIS

WHY AND HOW

THE PROBLEM:

The projected state budget deficit is over \$12 billion.

To close a gap this enormous with spending cuts alone and no additional taxes would devastate education, human services, and public safety.

Cutting spending across the board enough to close the budget gap would slash programs in half.

Since state and federal laws mandate certain spending levels in programs like Medicaid, many other programs would have to be cut by much more than half, or even entirely eliminated.

The state budget is responsible for paying for vital services that keep our communities strong and our families safe and healthy:

- Adequately funded public education to provide all students equal educational opportunity;
- Affordable, quality childcare for all who need it to keep working;
- Violence prevention and criminal justice for public safety
- Early intervention to preserve families and foster healthy growth and development of children;
- Treatment and rehabilitation services for mentally ill adults and children
- Access to timely medical and dental care for Illinois children;
- Care for the elderly.

– In a recession, state spending cuts can have more harmful economic effects than a state income tax increase, according to leading economists.

– The combined state and local tax burden in Illinois is low compared to other Midwestern states.

– Illinois has one of the most regressive tax systems in the country, with the greatest burden on those least able to pay.

– State funding of education has slipped from paying 48% of costs to under 30% of costs. Federal grants contribute about 9%. Schools turn to local property taxes to make up the difference.

– Escalating property taxes in areas without a large tax base drive businesses away while pushing housing costs out of reach.

– Illinois has the nation's worst gap in per pupil expenditures between rich districts and poor districts.

– By failing to provide an adequate education for too many students, we weaken our workforce and economy.

A GOOD SOLUTION:

Please tell your Legislators – Overhaul the Tax Structure

RAISE NEW AND DESPERATELY NEEDED REVENUE

- Increase the state income tax and provide targeted tax relief for low and middle income families through the state Earned Income Tax Credit
- Apply the state sales tax to some services that are already taxed by neighboring states

FULLY FUND THE STATE SHARE OF PUBLIC EDUCATION, INCLUDING EARLY CHILDHOOD

- Reduce the enormous disparity in per pupil spending between property-rich and property-poor school districts.
- Ease the property tax pressure on businesses and housing costs.

PRESERVE FUNDING FOR VITAL HUMAN SERVICES

- Raise funds necessary to protect many vital health and human services from experiencing deep budget cuts or even elimination

PROVIDE ACCOUNTABILITY

- Guarantee an adequate level of financial support for all schools
- Ensure responsibility and transparency in the budget process

Tell your state legislators: IT'S TIME TO BE RESPONSIBLE

- ***Balance the budget with a combination of spending cuts AND taxes***
- ***Invest in our future with fair funding for education and human services***

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS of ILLINOIS – lwvil.org

RESPONSIBLE BUDGET COALITION

http://www.voices4kids.org/getinvolved/files/RBC_purpose.pdf

For more information contact:

League of Women Voters of Illinois (LWVIL)
332 South Michigan Avenue, Suite 1150
Chicago, Illinois 60604

Phone: 312-939-5935 • Fax: 312-939-6887

Issues@lwvil.org

Attn: education funding specialist



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

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

Happy Holidays!

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-----OUR LEAGUE IN ACTION-----

League members have

- Testified in front of the Zoning Board of Appeals in support of wind farms as a renewable energy source;
- Sent a letter to the editor supporting effective Campaign Finance Reform in Illinois;
- Offered a program on healthcare reform with a panel of local experts and featuring Wendell Potter, national healthcare reform advocate, attended by an estimated 200 people;
- Developed an action plan to support the Election Study Committee's recommendations for improving election procedure and to support our consensus position on a single county election commission;
- Received a grant from LWVUS to bring two visitors from South America to our community in April to observe government in action.
- In November; offered a program on the International Intervention in Humanitarian Crises, featuring Gillian Sorensen from the United Nations;
- Participated in the City of Bloomington Citizen's Summit on November 30th to provide input on strategic planning;
- Wrote a letter to the editor in support of League's position on healthcare reform.