



THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF McLEAN COUNTY

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McLean County
www.lwvmclean.org

State of Illinois
www.lwvil.org

National
www.lwv.org

The Voter

Vol. 79 No. 8 of McLean County May 2013

LWV 2013 PROGRAM SCHEDULE

Hidden McLean County

Veterans in our Community - Issues and Experiences
Tuesday • April 23rd • 7:00 pm • Normal Public Library

While we hear about issues with veterans returning from stints in Iraq and Afghanistan, we have heard little about our own community. Yet, there are many veterans who are living, working, going to college here.

- How has their experience been returning from war?
- What has it been like to seek employment, go back to school after being at war, sit in university classrooms with undergraduates?
- What kind of services does our community offer them?
- Do they get help with school, jobs, benefits?

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This program will feature -

Jeanette Kavanaugh

Heartland Community College Student Veteran's Club Advisor

Mick Mills

Retired Illinois Department of Employment Security,
Veterans Employment Representative

Two veterans of recent wars: **John McKirgan & Alan Burton**

- The program is free and open to the public •

LWV of McLean County Annual Meeting

Tuesday • May 21st • 7:00 pm
McLean County Government Center

League of Women Voters of Illinois 2013 STATE CONVENTION

Friday - Sunday • June 7th - 9th
Carol Reitan Conference Center • Normal

From the desk of . . . Co-Presidents Phylis VerSteegh and Maureen O'Keefe

Preparing to hand over “presidential duties” to Maureen has caused me to do lots of thinking about the past two years. I've learned so much! And I've gotten to know so many people, have formed new friendships, and have a new appreciation for the League of Women Voters.

Attending last year's national convention in Washington, D.C. was awesome. It certainly made me more aware of the importance of the League and the impact this organization has had. We have advocated for so many causes and made changes that make all citizens' lives better.

Now we are getting ready for another annual meeting – May 21 at 7:00 p.m. at the Government Center. Please note the information needed for the LWV of McLean County annual meeting is in the attachment sent to all members. It is very important that you read the information and attend the meeting if possible. Here is a real chance to voice your opinions and make the Board aware of issues you think are important for the League to undertake and study.

We are also getting ready to host the LWVIL state convention in June. More information is included on page 3 in this issue. The local committee (fantastic group of people!) will be contacting you soon to find out when you can give us an hour or so to help. We are anxious to re-introduce Bloomington/Normal to fellow members from all over the state; we have some great plans.

Thank you again to my fellow Board members; you have been such a help to me and the League is lucky to have such fine leaders. To my fellow LWV McLean County members: You are part of a dynamic group of individuals who care about the lives of their fellow citizens.

Check out our website and talk to Board members about becoming more involved.

You will LOVE it!

...Phylis



Multi Cultural Leadership Program

This program prepares skilled, informed and self-aware individuals for leadership positions in public, private, educational, political and non-profit organizations.

The League was privileged to have two members of the 2013 Multicultural Leadership Program class serve as Board "shadowers".

Tereva Parham, left, and Emily Vigneri, right, participated in League board meetings and events during the past program year. They are talented, hard working women and we have thoroughly enjoyed getting to know them.

Congratulations to Emily and Tereva for graduating from this worthwhile program!

Our website is www.lwvmclean.org. And “like” us on Facebook.

Our Annual Dinner on April 11th was one of our most successful.

Our speakers, John Hanlon and Larry Golden from the Illinois Innocence Project were very interesting as they talked about the process of looking at wrongful convictions.

They then shared some touching stories.

Thank you to all who donated items for the silent auction. It was one of the best with a variety of items that made for some active bidding.

And a special thank you to my fabulous committee—

Mary Vogel, Pam Lubeck, Martha Everman, Kathy Tosh, Linda Stockton, Maureen O'Keefe.

They make it all happen.

. . . Dianne Williamson, Annual Fundraiser Chair

Seeking Your Input!

We are seeking nominations for two important League Awards:

Leaguer of the Year and League Project of the Year

Both of these awards will be presented at the Annual Meeting in May. "Leaguer of the Year" is awarded to a League member who has served "above and beyond" what we'd expect of any League Member.

We don't always have an award for a League Project of the Year. This award is presented in recognition of a project that has been significant in nature, fulfilling the League's mission to educate, advocate, and encourage civic engagement.

If you have a person or project in mind meriting the recognition of either Leaguer of the Year or League Project of the Year, we'd like to hear from you by Monday, May 13th.

Please respond with your nominations by contacting:

Maureen O'Keefe mokbg@comcast.net 309-258-4233

STATE CONVENTION UPDATE --

The local committee will be contacting members soon to see when you will be able to help with convention duties. There are many different volunteer positions and different times for jobs during these three days. Please help us be good hosts and take this opportunity to "show off" our community.

The Board has named the delegates to the LWVIL convention in June. Those are the people who will officially represent McLean County at the plenary sessions and vote on bylaws, state program positions and the new state officers. We are also entitled to send other attendees.

Volunteers will be able to attend workshops on Friday and Saturday (June 7 and 8) if the workshop room is not full. The Board has also agreed to send some non-delegate members to workshops and/or dinners and entertainment on Friday and Saturday nights.

Entertainment on Friday night is Jenny Riddle who gives impersonations of former First Ladies; Saturday night's entertainment is the Bluegrass band, Loose Gravel (Lt. Governor Sheila Simon is a member of this group).

Both nights' banquets and entertainment promise to be fun!
Awards will also be given to outstanding state League members.

You can review convention information on the state website (www.lwvil.org) and decide what sessions you would like to attend. Contact me at phylvs49@gmail.com for registration information.

Regular meetings of the City Council of the City of Bloomington are held on the 2nd and 4th Monday of each month at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers on the 2nd level of the City Hall in Bloomington, IL. Regular meetings falling on holidays are held on the day following such regular meeting date at the same hour and place.

Official members...

<u>Mayor</u>	Steve Stockton		
<u>Alderman</u>	Jamie Mathy, Ward 1	David Sage, Ward 2	Mboka Mwilambwe, Ward 3
	Judith I. Stearns, Ward 4	Jennifer McDade, Ward 5	Karen Schmidt, Ward 6
	Steven Purcell, Ward 7	Robert Fazzini, Ward 8	Jim Fruin, Ward 9

(Terms for Mayor and odd numbered wards expired on April 9, 2013.)

Manner Officials are selected... Municipal elections are held in April of odd numbered years.

Early in the fall of 2012, City Manager David Hales reported that there has been growth in the city's finances and things are stable and moving in the right direction. Future financial planning will look at funding over the next 15-20 years. Goals are to maintain fund balance, defeat deficits and focus on capital improvement projects.

In February, Mayor Steve Stockton appointed Jamie Mathy to fill Bernie Anderson's vacancy due to Bernie's resignation. In a 7-2 vote the Council approved Mathy for the duration of Anderson's seat, and he was sworn-in. At the next election, Mathy will be a write-in candidate against Kevin Lower. An article in *The Pantagraph* reported a proposed \$169.4 million budget for the next fiscal year beginning May 1 which does not include any increased fees or funding, but does add two more police officers and three more firefighters and a communications manager. According to City Manger, David Hales, "the position will help ensure transparency and improve public awareness of city programs and issues that affect everyone in the community." On April 8, Council approved the new budget and \$600,000 for Eagle View Park on the East side to be financed from a \$400,000 state grant and city's reserve funds that exceed city goals.

**Continuing business which will carry over
to newly elected mayor and aldermen are as follows:**

Managed Competition

This is a process of comparing city departments and private contractors to determine who should provide the City services. On April 22, the last meeting of the current council, the managed competition policy will be reconsidered. More work needs to be done on policy language and addressing possible employee's morale issues. According to Mayor Stockton, managed competition does not mean outsourcing and might well be negotiated with city departments retaining some services while others are contracted for more efficiency and cost effectiveness.

Downtown Development and Liquor Laws

Due to Bloomington liquor license recommendation, citizen opposition and council rejection, the city council, in November, placed a six month liquor license moratorium to expire on May 13, only two weeks after the new mayor and council's term begins. Downtown revitalization remains in indeterminate state as Mayor Stockton leaves office. The mayor has urged the council to approve a guiding plan including a system of paid parking and converting certain one-way streets to two-way streets with better bicycle access. That plan also encourages maintaining or cultivating downtown's historic character and arts community.

Infrastructure and Pension Costs

The council must agree how to balance the ongoing major budget demands of fixing roads, plus sewer, water and other infrastructure needs and reducing huge future pension burdens. Achieving higher pension contributions funding has been controversial and unsettled.

Quality of Life Subsidies

Discussion will hinge on how much the city will continue subsidizing the Coliseum, Miller Park Zoo, and Bloomington Center for the Performing Arts. The quarter cent sales tax enacted in 2008 will expire in 2015, thus dollars to quality-of-life venues will be determined by whether or not the council will seek a sales tax extension. Because of the city's financial situation, the council wants to focus on city services. If extension of the sales tax is not passed, alternatives might be to cut public spending and to move toward private fundraising and/or not-for-profit organizations to support city amenities.

* * *

City Council agenda and minutes can be conveniently found on the Bloomington City website, www.cityblm.org. Click on City Hall tab, meetings and agenda. At the bottom of that page you will see links to [live video stream](#) and WJBC [live broadcasts](#). Archived videos are also found on that page.

---Submitted by Carol Baker

Observer's Report: **Unit 5 School District**

Official Members... John Puzauskas (President), Jay Reece (Vice-President),
Mark Pritchett, Gail Ann Briggs, Wendy Maulson, Meta Mickens-Baker, Mike Trask

Manner Officials are Selected... Elected by citizens in the district

Is the official membership a cross-section of the community? The board has diversity of racial, gender, and age.

1. The general atmosphere was positive and the board seems to have a good working relationship. Some diversity in opinion is expressed during discussions. However, all votes that I have observed have been unanimous.
2. The pace of the meeting is good. Topics are discussed when needed but time is not wasted.
3. The order and conduct of the business were clear and follows the agenda. Copies of the agenda are available online ahead of the meeting and hard copies are provided at the meeting. Archived agenda and minutes are also available online.
4. The board hears reports from a number of sources including the business manager, the assistant superintendent for curriculum and instruction, and outside services when appropriate. The recommendations of those presenting are usually followed.
5. Several news outlets are present at each meeting including the Pantagraph. For the most part, their take is the same as mine. Though in one instance involving the tax levy, I felt the Pantagraph did not clearly state the board's position.
6. There are usually about 10-15 members of the public at each meeting. That number increased at the last meeting because the board is considering cuts due to budget constraints.
7. Significant policy decisions were made throughout the year. Recent meetings have focused on potential cuts due to decreases in revenue from both property taxes and state funding. Other important issues include the dissolution of the Mackinaw Valley Special Education Association, the issuance of a bond to replace money in the working cash fund that was used for asbestos removal, the purchase of 2-way radios to improve communication between and within schools, and approving redistricting plans for elementary schools.
8. Yes, the board appears to carry out the function for which it was established.
9. Elections have just occurred, and there will be one new board member next year. In addition, unpopular cuts may be made due to budget constraints. The board is in a difficult position given the uncertainty around state funding.

---Submitted by Laura Zimmerman

••• Women of Distinction Awards Banquet •••

Thursday • May 23rd • 5:30 pm • ISU • Bone Student Center/Brown Ballroom

We are once again putting League tables together for the annual YWCA Women of Distinction banquet. The Social Hour begins at 5:30PM followed by the Dinner & Keynote Speaker at 6:30PM.

The speaker this year is Gayle Tzemach Lemmon, who is a New York Times best selling author and Deputy Director of Women in Foreign Policy. She speaks on why investing in women can make the difference for the global economy. Lemmon authored the book "The Dressmaker of Khair Khana" which tells the story of one woman's courage in an Afghan neighborhood of women desperate to support their families.

The event will also honor six area women for making a difference in our community through their various accomplishments. Several League members are past winners, including Myra Gordon, who won last year in the category of Social Services.

If you would like to go, please send me a check for \$55 made payable to the YWCA Foundation. Also, please write your dinner choice on the check. The choices are:

- 1) Airline Chicken Breast, stuffed with crab
- 2) Beef Tenderloin
- 3) Vegetarian

Mail to: Sally Rudolph, 1918 Owens Drive, Bloomington, IL 61701

For more information, contact Sally at 309-663-5166 or LSRUDO@comcast.net

YWCA website at www.ywcamclean.org

The deadline is May 9th. We hope you can attend!

••• Women nominated for YWCA Women of Distinction Awards •••

Sixteen McLean County women have been nominated for this year's YWCA Women of Distinction Awards as a result of outstanding contributions to the community in one of the following categories:

Business • Creative Arts & Entertainment • Education • Professions • Social Services and Volunteer Service

A panel of judges, including local community leaders and executive staff from two other Illinois YWCAs, will review the nominations and select one winner in each category. Selection will be based on qualities of leadership, areas of achievement, and demonstrated commitment to improving McLean County through work and/or volunteer activities.

This year's nominees include:

Sabrina Burkiewicz, Bloomington; Madonna Courtright, Bloomington; Elaine Cousins, Bloomington; Ronda Glenn, Stanford; Arlene Hosea, Normal; Erin Kennedy, Normal; Sonya Mau, Normal; Pam Rathke, Colfax; Andrea Raycraft, Bloomington; Karen Rousey, Normal; Betty Rademacher, Normal; Tracey Siems, Bloomington; Mia Smith, Wapella; Ann Bastian White, Normal; Diane Wait, Bloomington; and Carolyn Yockey, Bloomington.

Gayle Tzemach Lemmon will be the keynote speaker as part of the 24th Annual YWCA McLean County Women of Distinction Awards Banquet, May 23, 2013. The banquet will be held in Illinois State University's Bone Student Center Brown Ballroom with social hour beginning at 5:30 p.m., followed by the 6:30 p.m. dinner and awards presentation. Lemmon is the *New York Times* bestselling author of *The Dressmaker of Khair Khana* and the Deputy Director of the Council on Foreign Relations Women and Foreign Policy Program.

Individual reservations are \$55 per person if purchased by May 10. Reservations after May 10 will be \$65 per person. Tables of eight are \$440 per table by May 10 and \$520 per table from May 11-17.

Serving the community since 1908, YWCA McLean County strives to eliminate racism and empower women through various programs and services.

For more information about the YWCA Women of Distinction Awards event contact Pat Poppe, Director of Fundraising & Development, at (309) 662-0461 ext. 224 or email ppoppe@ywcamclean.org or visit the website www.ywcamclean.org.