



THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF McLEAN COUNTY

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LWVIL Convention a Success

The 2013 LWVIL State Convention was held June 7-9 at the Carol Reitan Conference Center in Normal. The Convention celebrated 100 years of women voting in Illinois.

Throughout the event, Illinois League President Jan Dorner emphasized the importance of the LWV maintaining its non-partisan status.

One of the important topics was Graduated Rate Income Tax, or GRIT. We are going to hear a lot more about this since the League is participating in a push to get it on the ballot as a Constitutional Amendment.

As always, one of the best parts of the Convention was meeting Leaguers from other areas of the state. The lunches and dinners, as well as workshops, provided opportunities to meet many attendees and to learn about what's going on in their communities.

More information about the Convention can be found on pages 2-4. For photos see the LWV of Illinois, www.lwvil.org.

Thanks to All Volunteers

Thanks to the dedicated LWV McLean County members who volunteered at the State Convention, we had nothing but positive comments. The entire convention went smoothly – over 40 volunteers were on time to cover 73 shifts.

The local committee and the state committee worked for over a year to put the weekend together. We could not have done it without the help of all of you.

YOU made the convention a success! Thank you again to all of you. Have a wonderful summer.

---Outgoing Co-President Phylis VerSteeh

Local Mental Health Study to Begin

Details on page 5

Reports from McLean County Delegates

JE Myers

I attended the GRIT class—twice. It was excellent and I felt it gave me information that I really needed to understand what has to be done to fix the problems in our state.

I also attended Joni Painter's class on Leadership and Member Development and came away with a lot of good ideas from there.

I gave a presentation about poll watching and had about 30 people in the class. The response was very good, and I expect to hear from some of the other chapters in the future who may want help starting their own poll watching program.

I had an absolute BLAST spending three days surrounded by about 160 very smart, very politically savvy, informed women. I made some new friends including the president of the Jackson County LWV, Emily Burke, who we sort of "adopted" during the convention because she was there all alone.

I learned a lot about the League, and was particularly impressed how *carefully* things are conducted and weighed. Things may move slowly through the LWV process but in the end I think it pays off. "We speak with one voice," as outgoing President Jan Dorner reminded us. It may take awhile to come to a consensus and that "one voice" but once we arrive – it sticks!

I got to know my fellow McLean County members better too. Kathy Tosh, Maureen O'Keefe, Diane Williamson, Mary Lynn Edwards, Alexis Kalish, and I served as Delegates together and that alone was a hoot! It was a real honor to be a Delegate—for being such a "rookie" of a member.

In all I was very proud of our chapter (very organized, very active other people said of us) and very proud of the great impression that Bloomington-Normal made on the other delegates.

I was also extremely impressed with the organization job our Phylis did. She was calm, cool, collected at all times, and had everything "covered." I know other chapters were equally impressed with Phylis' accomplishment!

After it was over on Sunday, I went into LWV Convention Withdrawal! We have GOT to go to the National in Dallas next summer! DALLAS OR BUST!

Dianne Williamson

I was reminded once again that Women know how to collaborate and compromise.

I really enjoyed dining with the reps from other Leagues, getting to know them a little, and hearing the challenges they are facing in their local league and communities. The strength of these Leaguers and how they are responding to the challenges was very impressive.

I really enjoyed the workshops and wished we had time for more. I also wish we had more time to talk with other delegates.



At Convention kickoff, outgoing LWVIL president, Jan Dorner, reminds us of our suffragette roots

Alexis Kalish

I thought the whole convention was well-planned and packed with opportunity to learn.

I attended three workshops, the Plenary, and both banquets.

I learned a great deal about GRIT (Graduated Rate Income Tax). I learned what LWVIL's positions are, and how they conduct their business. I got a better feel for the current status of Leagues across the state.

I would have done more "homework" before I attended the Plenary. Had I done this, understanding the positions and process would have been easier to follow.

I enjoyed seeing intelligent, well-informed women speak competently about issues. The banquets and entertainment were fun. I couldn't get up early enough or stay up late enough to take advantage of everything offered.

Visit our website www.lwvmclean.org
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From Our Presidents:

I think you can see from the comments offered by our League's delegates and volunteers, State Convention was all about learning, sharing, and collaborating...within individual chapters and between chapters all across the state. I was extremely proud of the collaborative effort our League demonstrated in planning and in a very real sense, hosting this Convention. We learned that while we've already accomplished great results in McLean County through our League's work – such as our court observer and poll watching programs, candidate forums and voter registration drives, our very active Observer Corps and our continual outreach to the community through our monthly educational programs – we can still accomplish much more!

In this upcoming year you'll see our League actively engaged in a county-wide mental health study and a wide variety of educational efforts targeting the issues the Illinois League of Women Voters has taken on as action priorities such as: fiscal policy and tax reform, immigration, voting rights, climate change, redistricting and GRIT (Graduated Rate Income Tax). We learned the most successful Leagues are those who stay focused on the issues that matter most to the citizens of the county and state, and who remember to look sideways by proactively working with neighboring Leagues to broaden our collective reach. But most crucially, we believe the McLean County League of Women Voters will remain most relevant by finding innovative ways to tap into the talents and energy of our entire membership as we move forward in undertaking the important work of the League of Women Voters.

---Maureen O'Keefe and Kathy Tosh

Publicity Chat Explores Benefits of Good Rapport with Media

Laurie Bergner teamed up with *Pantagraph* Courts and Legal Affairs Reporter Edith Brady-Lunny to lead a morning chat on publicity at the Convention. Although the turnout was small, the group was really involved. One participant, from McHenry County, wished they'd been allotted more time, and another called it "inspirational."

Laurie talked about the importance of publicizing programs, forums and League positions, noting that our work matters only if people see it. She discussed publicity with media, as well as writing commentaries and other ways to make our organization visible to the Public, such as essay contests and special speakers.

Edith discussed the importance of a personal relationship with media and working with media to give them ideas for stories and follow-ups on programs that can work into future stories. Laurie and Edith's relationship has been useful for both of them. They give each other helpful information on topics of mutual interest, and the League is often able to get media interest in their programs and positions.

Home-Made Treats Give Leaguers a Lift

JE Myers' mom, Margaret, made 23 dozen cookies for the State Convention! It gave her a lot of pleasure to do (she loves a challenge) and to contribute to the Convention in some small way. Volunteers, Attendees, and Delegates said they were delicious! Margaret was very pleased that everyone loved them, and ALL of them were gone from Hospitality by the end of Sunday.



Edith Brady-Lunny and Laurie Bergner present chat at LWVIL Convention

Welcome Back to Joni Painter

LWV of McLean County proudly welcomed our own Joni Painter back to work more with us locally as she completed her two years as Vice President-Membership for the LWVIL. We sang a rousing rendition of "When Joni Comes Marching Home Again" at the closing of the Plenary to mark her return:

*When Joni comes marching home again
Hurrah, Hurrah
When Joni comes marching home again
Hurrah, hurrah
The Board will cheer
And the members shout
We'll all have much
To smile about
And we'll all be glad when
Joni comes marching home*

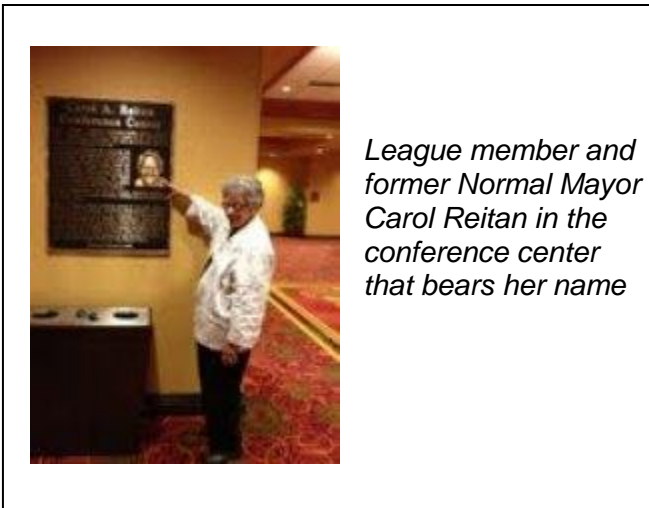
Volunteers and Attendees Enjoy Convention

Planning Pays Off

I was a volunteer and worked at the conference center registration desk as well as a timer in the plenary session. I had never been to a LWV convention before so it was interesting to see how things were set up.

At the check-in, everyone loved having the things they signed up for and their meal tickets inside their name tags. People also commented on the great location in proximity to the Amtrak station. They also liked the freebies & gift bag.

I enjoyed meeting other members from around the state. ---Camille Taylor



League member and former Normal Mayor Carol Reitan in the conference center that bears her name

Leaguer Has a Full Weekend

I worked Hospitality on Friday and was a timekeeper on Saturday morning. I was able to attend three workshops and especially liked the one on Graduated Rate Income Tax. I am excited to see what the League can do to help get this Illinois Constitutional amendment on the ballot for November 2014.

I went to both Friday and Saturday night dinners. The food and entertainment were both excellent.

I thought the convention was extremely well organized, thanks to our Local Arrangements committee, led by Phylis VerSteegh.

The League has a lot of rules that sometimes seem cumbersome but they enable us to get a lot done in a short time, which I like.

I especially enjoyed just being with and talking with Leaguers from across the state. What an interesting group!

---Sally Rudolph

Illinois Had Leading Role In Suffrage

On Saturday, I attended "100 Years of Voting" and learned that Illinois was the first state east of the Mississippi to give women the right to vote. Illinois was also the first state in the nation to ratify the 19th amendment. The LWV of Evanston, who ran the workshop, wrote an interesting book about Illinois' role in Women's voting history.

On Sunday, I was a doorkeeper for the plenary session (handing out materials and closing the doors during voting) and then got drafted to be a runner. I carried motions from delegates to the president and parliamentarian up on the platform and to the session secretary so they could be officially recorded in the live presentation.

It was exciting to watch the delegates choose their wording, trying to get their motions entered before the discussion moved on to other issues. If I'd known I was going to be "on the floor" I would have brushed up on Roberts Rules as things were a bit confusing at times.

---Susan Alford

Getting GRIT to the Public

The workshop "Flat Doesn't Work: A Better Illinois Alternative" explained the LWVIL position that a Graduated Rate Income Tax, or GRIT, would be fairer than a flat tax because it takes into account a citizen's ability to pay.

All of the sessions on GRIT, were excellent. They included information about how to present this issue to the public, along with PowerPoint presentations that will soon be available for us to use in our community presentations.

---Laurie Bergner

First-Timer Impressed by Delegates

This was my first League Convention. I was a timekeeper for the Sunday morning session.

I was impressed with the professionalism of the meeting and with the preparation of the pro and con speakers on the issues.

I was particularly impressed that some issues were tabled that may have had inadequate preparation or education and I am confident that the League will continue to pursue them and make great decisions on future policies and positions.

---Martha Everman

Other League News

Observer's Report: McLean County Jail Review Committee

May 23, 2013

The McLean County Jail Review Committee is a citizens' group whose purpose is to identify areas of concern which may exist relative to the county jail operation and bring those areas of concern to the jail administration and other public officials. The Committee also recommends solutions; seeks support of other organizations; advocates educational and socialization programs; and assists in educating the public regarding matters pertinent to the jail.

The Committee met on May 23, 2013 at the Sheriff's Office to review the finalized report of the Committee's inmate survey and to discuss mental health issues in the Jail. Both Sheriff Emery and State's Attorney Jason Chambers were present.

The inmate survey was conducted last summer/ fall. 46 inmates were interviewed. Areas of particular interest were highlighted and

presented to the Sheriff. The Sheriff responded in general to the report by stating most of the comments were not indicative of how well the Jail operates. "If you want better food, educational, recreational opportunities, stay out of jail." It was agreed the report was just another perspective of life in jail and that overall the operation of the Jail is favorable. The Committee plans to review the questions prior to conducting the next report.

Mental health issues have been reviewed by the Committee as well as being addressed in the local media. The Sheriff is waiting to receive funding that will enable him to conduct an assessment of what needs to be done to address this issue. There is an area within the current facilities being considered to isolate those inmates with mental problems.

---Gary Hoover

Interested in Mental Health Study?

We are currently seeking members and non-members interested in the following new study: Update LWV of McLean County's position on Mental Health.

The position now reads as follows: League supports expansion of community-directed services to children, adolescents and the elderly.

A new study of mental health services in McLean County would include, but not be limited to, the following scope:

- A study of local community based mental health services with a goal of determining what services are lacking.
- Determine who the underserved citizens are
- Determine the causes of this lack of services.
- What agencies could provide these additional services and how could they be funded.
- What, if any should be the role of local governments in providing/funding these services.

Mental health services have changed radically in the past 20-25 years. State facilities to serve those with mental health issues are now almost non-existent, and funding for all mental health services has been drastically reduced. In addition, there is currently a large burden on our local jail (see observer's report) due at least in part to the decrease of community services.

Contact Sally Rudolph to help with this valuable study – LSRUDO@comcast.net.

Excellent Attendance for Moderator Training

On June 22, LWVIL Trainer Robin LaBedz (LWV of Arlington Heights-Mt. Prospect-Buffalo Grove Area) presented an excellent moderator training session in Bloomington, along with Missy Wilhelm (LWV of Wheaton). The day was full of interesting anecdotes. Robin and Missy were impressed with the turnout of 17 people from LWV McLean County plus Peoria and Champaign; a previous session in Chicago had only 6 participants.

Robin stressed the importance of always being professional in dress and decorum and remembering that you represent the League. Moderators must be impartial and nonpartisan, and the questions should be about the issues, not the personalities of the candidates.

While Voter Services does the actual debate planning, moderators do need to prepare ahead. Robin and Missy provided inspiring instruction, detailed handouts and lists of resources. New moderators are encouraged to gain experience by helping with other debates and shadowing experienced moderators before chairing their first event.

Looking Ahead...

- **August 20** – Board Meeting
- **September 10** – Membership Event