



THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF McLEAN COUNTY

Co-Presidents

Maureen O'Keefe
309-258-4233
info@lwvmclean.org

Kathy Nicholson-Tosh
309-530-2050
info@lwvmclean.org

Membership

Becky Hines
309-828-6140
membership@lwvmclean.org

Treasurer

Emily Vigneri
309-532-6932
treasurer@lwvmclean.org

Newsletter

Susan Alford
309-829-1472
bulletin@lwvmclean.org

League of Women Voters of
McLean County *Voter* Newsletter
is published eight times a year

Official address of League of Women Voters:

1918 Owens Drive
Bloomington, IL 61701
309-663-5166

Websites of League of Women Voters:
McLean County www.lwvmclean.org
State of Illinois www.lwvil.org
National www.lwv.org

In this Issue:

Save the Date	p. 1
Co-President's Letter	p. 2
Popular Programs	p. 3
Consensus Meetings	p. 4
Redistricting	p. 5
Observer's Report	p. 6
Wine Tasting	p. 9
International Women's Day	p. 10

The Voter

of McLean County

Vol. 80 No. 5

February 2014

Save the Date: LWV Programs 2014

Hidden McLean County

Tuesday, January 28, 7:00 p.m.

- Normal Public Library Community Room
- Focus on people with developmental disabilities and the aged
- See page 3 for participants

Consensus Meeting: Modified Ward System

Monday, February 3, 7:00 p.m.

- Mount Pisgah Baptist Church, 801 West Market St., Bloomington
- Modified Ward System for Bloomington City Council to appear on March referendum
- League members to speak on pros and cons – see page 4

State Superintendent of Schools, Chris Koch

Tuesday, February 18, 7:00 p.m.

- Illinois Education: Strengths, Issues and Challenges
- Location TBA

International Women's Day Breakfast

Saturday, March 1, 9:00 a.m.

- Uptown Normal Marriott
- Co-presented by Soroptimist International Bloomington-Normal. See page 10

Consensus Meeting: Mental Health Study

Tuesday, March 25, 6:30 p.m.

- Bloomington Police Department, Osborn Room
305 S. East Street
- See page 4 for preliminary findings of McLean County Mental Health Study

From the Desk of Our Co-Presidents

Welcome back to the second half of our League year which promises to be fairly busy!

As we've discussed throughout this year, we're committed to three major initiatives in 2014: partnering with the "Yes for Independent Maps" organization to gather the requisite number of signatures needed to put the proposed Illinois Redistricting amendment on this November's ballot, advocating on behalf of the Graduated Rate Income Tax measure which we also hope to see on the November ballot, and completing our League's McLean County Mental Health study. We thank the many Leaguers who've been active in some or all of these projects (and some of you have been *quite active* in all three of them!). I would be remiss if I also didn't give a "shout out" to new League member Glen Ludwig who has been tireless in his work on the petition drive for the redistricting amendment, or as he would say, the "Nix Gerrymandering" effort! Glen is the link between our League and *Yes for Independent Maps*. He's also the "brains" behind many of the volunteer ideas we continue to put in front of our membership concerning this important effort.

We'll be holding two consensus meetings over the next two months. The first concerns a referendum vote for the modified ward system for the Bloomington City Council (Feb. 3rd), while the second (March 25) will be the consensus meeting on our League's mental health study, which represents the culmination of the work of the study group. This group has been led by our League's Action Chair, Sally Rudolph, who has guided and overseen the work of a 25-member committee. We are so appreciative of the efforts of the many League members who've worked so diligently on this important project.

We're hoping that as many of you as possible will prioritize attending both of these meetings. You'll hear the results of the studies that will inform each of these consensus meetings and most importantly, you'll have the opportunity to voice your opinions in response to the consensus questions we'll take up. Even if you don't live in Bloomington, we encourage all members to attend the meeting on the modified ward structure so that you can be educated as to what's involved in this type of government structure, and again, voice your opinions as valued League members. Both of these meetings are discussed in more detail in this issue of the Voter.

Beyond our consensus meetings, there are still other ways we urge you to stay active in League. We still have plenty of opportunities for individuals to participate in carrying petitions for the Redistricting effort (see page 5). We'll be looking for some help with voter registration in January and February, and we'll be hosting a forum for the McLean County Sherriff's race in the March 18th primary on March 3rd at Mt. Pisgah Church in Bloomington. As always, the International Women's Day Breakfast which our League co-sponsors with Soroptimist International of Bloomington-Normal will be held the first Saturday in March (March 1), which remains a great cause for us to support. We have excellent speakers lined up for our monthly programs, and of particular note, you'll be able to see Illinois Superintendent of Education Christopher Koch and Illinois Supreme Court Chief Justice Rita Garman.

And finally, we're happy to report that our League continues to grow new members and retain long-standing ones. As of January, we have 127 active members in our League. This year, we launched the "Drinks and Dialogue" sessions that are held after work to provide a meeting venue in addition to our membership meetings and monthly programs for Leaguers who are interested in alternative types of programs. This idea was surfaced at a fall "New Member" event and we're happy to report they've been pretty successful, so we plan to keep doing them. Be on the lookout for upcoming communications on our next session.

--Maureen O'Keefe

Popular Programs

Hidden McLean County – January 28

Back by popular demand is our annual "Hidden McLean County" program, in which we highlight **services and client experiences of groups that are not highly visible in our community.**

This year's groups will be people with developmental disabilities and the elderly.

The service speakers for those with developmental disabilities will be Laura Furlong, CEO of Marcfirst, and Netitia Carey, self-advocate. Speakers for services for the elderly will include Jenn Herrman, Case Manager for Community Care Systems, Kathryn Johnson, Assistant Director, PATH, and Tami Wacker, Regional Long Term Care Ombudsman, East Central Illinois Area Agency on Aging.

Additionally, clients will also come to talk about their experiences, helping to give a first-hand understanding of their difficulties. This program will be held in **Normal Public Library's Community Room at 7:00 pm on Tuesday evening, January 28.**



Public Defender Kim Campbell and McLean County State's Attorney Jason Chambers answer questions at the November program

Drinks and Dialogue – February 26



Join Camille Taylor and other Leaguers on Wednesday, February 26, at A. Renée in downtown Bloomington. Casual conversation begins at 5:00 p.m., directed discussion

at 5:30. *Topic to be announced.*

Annual Dinner – April 16 Chief Justice Rita B. Garman, Illinois Supreme Court

- **Holiday Inn Hotel, Bloomington**
- **Wednesday, April 16, 5:30 p.m.**
- Initiatives of the Supreme Court and important cases decided in the last year
- Silent auction fundraiser

Fun Facts:

January and February each contain significant dates relative to the League of Women Voters.

Can you guess the significance of January 9th and February 14th?

Test your memory and see if you're right (answers on page 6).

--Maureen

Consensus Meeting – Monday, February 3, 7:00 p.m.

Emergency Study On Modified Ward System for Bloomington City Council

The Board of Directors of the League of Women Voters of McLean County approved an emergency local study in December 2013 for the modified ward system for the Bloomington City Council. This referendum was approved to be on the March 18, 2014 ballot because an adequate number of Bloomington voters signed petitions requesting it. Under the circumstances an emergency study was possible under national and state League guidelines.

A group of citizens is studying all sides of this issue. Their findings will be presented at a League Consensus Meeting at 7:00 p.m. on Monday, February 3, 2014, at Mount Pisgah Baptist Church, 801 West Market Street, Bloomington.

CONSENSUS QUESTION: "Shall the City of Bloomington elect part of the councilmen at large (3) and part of the councilmen from districts (5) with staggered four-year terms and biennial elections? Yes/No"

Consensus rules will be reviewed at the beginning of the meeting. The study committee will report their findings from interviews with persons who are both in favor of this referendum and persons who are opposed to it, as well as other research. Then we will hold discussion among League members who wish to speak.

The League Board of Directors will determine if consensus is reached. If it is, we will be able to advocate for our program position.

This meeting is free and open to the public. Only League members (no matter where they live) may speak and take part in consensus. People may join the League prior to the start of the meeting.

--Phyllis VerSteegh

Consensus Meeting – Tuesday, March 25, 6:30 p.m.

LWV Preliminary Report: Critical Gaps in McLean County Mental Health Services

Mental health services in the county are hampered by a lack of coordination among care providers, a severe shortage of psychiatrists and psychiatric care nurses and inadequate housing for the mentally ill. Those are among the preliminary findings of a new, independent study of mental health services by the McLean County League of Women Voters.

The League found that services are spread among many different agencies, with no single point of entry for services, leading often to confusion and frustration for those with mental illness. The study also cited a lack of crisis stabilization beds for short-term housing and inadequate early intervention and prevention services, as well as tools for crisis intervention.

The lack of jobs and job coaches for the mentally ill is another critical factor, the study said. The League said inadequate funding levels and a lack of leadership are over-arching problems contributing to the lack of services.

The League voted to undertake a study of local mental health services at its annual meeting last May. Twenty-five League members participated in the study. They divided into teams of 3 or 4 members, led by a team captain. The teams interviewed 40 mental health care providers, funders and advocacy groups.

The interviews with providers took place in the fall, and extensive reports were subsequently developed.

All teams met in December and compiled a list of critical issues for the League's preliminary report.

The League said several local care providers noted in their interviews that McLean County lags behind other nearby counties, including Livingston, Mason and DeWitt counties, in provided mental health services. DuPage, Madison and St. Clair counties were also cited for their innovative approaches.

"Some other counties manage to find ways to coordinate services and are more creative in developing ways to provide services," said Sally Rudolph, chair of the League's mental health study committee. Rudolph said members of the committee "are feeling shame and embarrassment at the extreme deficiencies" their inquiry uncovered.

Rudolph said a full report from the mental health committee will be forthcoming. She said the League would like to work with local leaders to incorporate in McLean County some of the best practices used by nearby counties to serve the mentally ill.

Report to be presented at Consensus Meeting: Tuesday, March 25, 6:30 p.m., Bloomington Police Department, 305 S. East Street, Osborn Room

--from Press Release

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT: Sally Rudolph, mental health study committee chair, 309-663-5166 LSRUDO@comcast.net,

Redistricting Effort

2014 Goal: Putting Illinois Voters in Charge

As you are aware, the League of Woman Voters of Illinois is supporting the petition drive to place on the November ballot a question regarding an amendment to the Illinois Constitution. This amendment, if passed, would move the responsibility of redistricting Illinois legislative districts from the Illinois Legislature to an independent commission.

Locally, Leaguer Glen Ludwig is heading up this drive, and we have at least 18 Leaguers carrying petitions. They have garnered over 1000 signatures so far. Those carrying petitions are Rob Fazzini, Carol Baker, Laurie Bergner, Mary Broad, Jana (Orlyn) Edge, Jan Hood, Anne Nadakavukaren, Glen Ludwig, Rose Marsaglia, Maureen O'Keefe, Jack Porter, Julie Prandi, Sally Rudolph, Phylis VerSteegh, Mary Broad, Carol Reitan, Marlene Gregor, Meredith Schroeer, Camille Taylor, Mary Lynn Edwards and Kathy Tosh (forgive me if I have missed anyone). Everyone reports that carrying petitions in their purses or briefcases is a lot of fun. We take them everywhere we go—book clubs, haircuts, social gatherings, neighborhood meetings.

YOU ARE INVITED TO PARTICIPATE IN THE PETITION DRIVE. Even if you can just fill one petition, it will be a big help. Please contact Glen Ludwig, and he will get you petitions and help you get

started. Glen has also put together a great PowerPoint presentation. If you have any suggestions about where this could be shown, please let us know.

We are confident that there are many thousands of registered voters in our area that are ready and willing to support our effort. Our **challenge**, our **opportunity** is to make contact with these people and ASK for their support. Adding more petition carriers will make the task easier. Growing our circulator team will allow the average effort needed to be much less.

Certainly the *Pantagraph's* Sunday, January 12th, Op-ed provided great support to our efforts: www.pantagraph.com/news/opinion. To maintain visibility and interest we need to regularly have letters to the editors in the paper. **Please call Glen if you can write a letter to the editor.**

As we move forward, we expect/hope that much of the signature capture will be at local events. Glen is in the process of updating the event calendar and will send information on that later this week. If you know of an event that would provide a good opportunity, **please send him details.** Next U.S. Bank petition and information exchange is Saturday, February 8, from 9:00 to 11:00 a.m.

Thank you so much!

--Sally Rudolph

Procedures for Picking Up/ Dropping Off Signed Redistricting Petitions:

Petitions can be picked up or dropped off from 9:00 – 11:00 a.m. at US Bank (on the corner of Veteran's Parkway and Eastland Drive) in the second floor Conference Room.

This service is available on the 2nd and 4th Saturday of every month through March. A notary will be present to notarize your petition.

Remaining drop off dates are:

February 8, February 22

March 8, March 22.

Contact Illinoisredistrict@gmail.com or call Glen Ludwig, at 309-585-1273, for information or support.



Instructions for Petition Signers:

1. **Signers** must be registered to vote in the State of Illinois. **Signers** MAY sign petition, and sign a petition for a political party (e.g., signing a petition for a Republican or Democratic candidate office AND signing this petition is perfectly acceptable).
2. Petition **signers** SHOULD sign their names as listed on their voter's registration card. For example, "William E. Jones" not "Bill Jones."
3. Petition **signers** should Sign and Not Print their names, unless that is the way they signed their voter's registration card.
4. DO NOT use ditto ("") marks for any part of an address.

IndMap Petition Solicitation

Thanks to the many LWV members who are providing excellent support with active engagement in seeking petition signatures. To get the “stop gerrymandering” amendment on the November ballot, we must ramp up activity each month. The total petition campaign goal for the Greater McLean County Region, of near 10,000 signatures is definitely attainable, but only with a continuation and growth in a well-coordinated effort. Thus far, the team has responded with regular monthly increases in signature capture. At the end of December our region’s signature capture tallied just under 3000.

As of January 19, I know of 18 LWV members who are carrying petitions with 934 signatures captured by the 6 who have turned in petitions thus far. There may be more LWV circulators and petitions completed by league members than noted above, as some may have requested petitions from and returned completed forms to the Chicago campaign office. As we move forward, I would ask/ suggest that all petitions go

through this region to enable having accurate numbers on our efforts. The petition drop off / pick up is occurring the 2nd and 4th Saturday morning from 9:00 – 11:00 at US Bank on Eastland Drive. If that is not convenient for you, call me at 309-585-1273 and we will make other arrangements.

To achieve our goal we need to ramp up the “**Active Ask**” - citizens are ready and willing to sign, they just need to be asked by a circulator to spread the ink. We need more active circulators. Based on actual petition return via the region we have 35 active circulators. To reach our region goal we need to see the active circulators reach the 75 to 80 area by the end of March.

Thanks for your strong support to date. If you are not yet involved, give it a try. It is not difficult and can be very gratifying – being a part of fixing a major flaw in the Illinois Constitution.

--Glen Ludwig glen@creativesolutions.com

Poll Watching at Residents’ Election



Leaguer Sally Rudolph was asked to represent the League as a poll watcher at Bloomington’s Wood Hill Residents’ Council Election on December 30.

Poll watchers (l-r): Ron Bowen, Wood Hill resident; Terri Montesano, volunteer; Sally Rudolph; and Maxine Newton, Wood Hill resident.

January 9: Birthday of Carrie Chapman Catt, founder of the League of Women Voters

February 14: League of Women Voters is founded

Bloomington City Council

Observer’s Report: August–December 2013 ♦ Carol Baker with Marlene Gregor & Phylis VerSteegh

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.

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. You may view live rebroadcasts of Bloomington City Council meetings at various times during the weeks following each meeting on local TV channel 20.

--cont. page 7

Official Council members (from City of Bloomington web site at www.cityblm.org)

[Mayor Tari Renner](#)

[Alderman Ward 1 — Kevin Lower](#)

[Alderman Ward 2 — David Sage](#)

[Alderman Ward 3 — Mboka Mwilambwe](#)

[Alderman Ward 4 — Judith I. Stearns](#)

[Alderman Ward 5 — Jennifer McDade](#)

[Alderman Ward 6 — Karen Schmidt](#) — Mayor Pro Tem

[Alderman Ward 7 — Scott Black](#)

[Alderman Ward 8 — Robert Fazzini](#)

[Alderman Ward 9 — Jim Fruin](#)

You may also send an email to all Aldermen at citycouncil@cityblm.org

All regular mail can be sent to: City of Bloomington

109 E. Olive St.

Bloomington, IL 61701

Manner in which these officials are selected: Municipal elections are held in April of odd numbered years. Terms for Mayor and even numbered wards expire in April of 2015 for the even numbered wards: 2 (Sage), 4 (Stearns), 6 (Schmidt) and 8 (Fazzini).

This could change significantly if the modified ward system gets on the ballot March 18, 2014 and passes. The referendum would ask voters if they want to switch from the city's current 9-ward system to a "modified ward" system that would include five wards, each represented by its own alderman, and four additional aldermen who would be elected at-large.

1. Is the official membership a cross-section of the community (i.e. such as age, gender, economic or social background, political or philosophical outlook)? Wards represent various districts in Bloomington with one alderman serving each ward. Three are women and six are men of wide age range.

2. What is the pace of the meetings? The mayor endeavors to conduct the meeting's agenda in a fair and crisp manner. Sometimes the pace gets bogged down when council members request clarification or present their views on items up for a vote.

Is there too little or too much discussion? Discussion generally moves along well. Time limits stated by the new mayor are well adhered to for the most part except when closing comments tend to ramble on.

3. Are the order and conduct of business clear to the public? Yes – The public can log on to the city website to make a print out of council meeting agenda. The agenda allows 15 minutes for public comment at the beginning of each regular council meeting.

4. Are there standards for reaching decisions (factual analysis, recommendations of committees, influence of individual members, concern for public reaction, influence of special interest groups, etc.)? Yes.

Quest for Closure seeking: The city has a set protocol for deciding on issues that require a vote. Usually there is a study with a written conclusion. Citizen's response time is given; recommendations received from citizens and/ or from established committees. E-mails are an important communicator as well as the city website; the process of involving citizen input about what they want the community to be is important to the mayor. The mayor can suspend the rules to offer a special time to hear from the community.

5. Is the media present (newspaper, radio, TV)? Usually – A reporter from *The Pantagraph* regularly attends council meetings and proceedings and an unbiased summary usually appears in the late edition online and in print the day following council meetings. Occasionally, TV media is present on agenda items with broad-based community support when citizens are present.

--cont. page 8

6. What is the size of the audience? Audiences usually number about 25 to 50, but for special or controversial issues, there can be standing room only.

Are there “regulars” besides you, the League member? Is there opportunity for public expression? Yes – Citizen attendance varies with the items presented, but there are some regulars, such as League members, Tricia Stiller, Downtown Bloomington Association director, most all the heads of the city government including the police, and maybe a neighborhood association representative. The audience is invited to speak on an issue, and granted permission by the mayor for an allotted time.

7. What type of business was handled? Voting on consent items that were recommended for approval by the city manager, removing various items from the consent agenda for further review and discussion, awarding of contracts, voting on applications, voting on new ordinances, discussions on pertinent issues, approving water and sewer for new subdivisions, money issues (pension, taxation, budget cuts, income sources). Special areas of concern such as gang activity, the downtown bar scene, deteriorating streets/sewers, and bridge/dam repairs at Lake Evergreen.

Were there any significant policy decisions made? Yes

The council reviewed the trash and garbage removal plan and set new, higher fees. Priority items have been repairing streets and replacing water mains and pipes—many over 100 years old. In October, a plan was approved to borrow \$10 million to pay for street repairs.

8. Does this board or commission carry out the function for which it was established? Yes, for the most part.

9. What do you see as possible issues and problems facing this board in the future?

Issues:

- 1) Petitions were circulated and accepted to change the makeup of the city council to a “hybrid” system of some council persons representing wards and some elected “at large. This system is being used by other Central Illinois communities and seems to be successful. The issue will now be on the ballot for vote in the next election.
- 2) Under-funded pensions for police and fire fighters could lead to an increase in property tax or other tax revenues such as gasoline and utility taxes or some reductions of overall expenditures or a combination of those options. Mayor Renner has said he opposes a hike in the property tax and favors earmarking funds for pensions with gradual utility tax increases spanning over several years.
- 3) The proposed east-side highway under consideration since 1999 is a long term issue. Predictions and studies show that this will be a needed road. However, consensus is not yet there with costs projected up to \$300 million and continuing debate over routing of the highway.
- 4) The Council voted to accept the Downtown Improvement Plan and will begin to implement it in the coming years.
- 5) The recent loan to repair the streets carries a reported 10-year payback plan that would cost about \$1.2 million annually. How to pay down the debt remains a moot point.

Problems:

- 1) Gangs are always a problem as well as drug trafficking and enforcing solutions for serious breaches of law including police presence at the downtown bar scene;
- 2) visual improvements to the city (gateways, banners, more planting, signage, regulations, and enforced zoning);
- 3) stalemates caused by council diversity and tabling of controversial issues;
- 4) not taking the advice of the city manager and other knowledgeable people;
- 5) lack of enough money to make or create progress, and mounting debt.

--Carol Baker, Marlene Gregor & Phylis VerSteegh

Holiday Fun at the League Wine Tasting & Social



Carol Richardson and friends usher in the holidays



Martha Everman chats with friends

Our December 3rd Wine Tasting and Social was so much fun and a huge success. Ninety-two Leaguers and friends visited, shopped the Art Center's Holiday Treasures, tried some tasty wines and relaxed in the beautiful atmosphere at the Art Center. What a nice beginning to the holiday season.

Thank you to all of you who took time to attend and all of the Leaguers who sold tickets to the event. Thanks to the Art Center for providing such a lovely setting and A. Renée for the tasty wines.

A very special thank you to my fundraising committee members—Mary Vogel, Martha Everman, Pam Lubeck, Charlette Elm, and Kathy Tosh. You make it happen.

--Diane Williamson



Diane Williamson, Kathy Nicholson-Tosh and Mary Vogel



Judy Valente-Reynard, Linda Healy and Maureen O'Keefe



League friends enjoy wine and shopping for art



Lee Rudolph and Glen Ludwig



Charlette Elm, Mary Lynn Edwards, Roger Elm and Joe Culpepper



Cindy Langrel, Steve Kossman, Missy Smock and Ray Smock

18th Annual International Women's Day Breakfast

In celebration of International Women's Day--A worldwide event.

Co-Presenters:

Soroptimist International Bloomington-Normal
League of Women Voters of McLean County



Many Faces, Many Roles

Understanding the many roles women play.

Saturday, March 1, 2014

Uptown Normal Marriott

Doors open at 8:30 a.m.— Event 9:00— 11:00 a.m.

*Table Sponsors \$250/8 seats includes:
sponsor recognition at table & in event program
and any advanced advertising.*

Tickets \$25/each or \$10 age 18 and under.

Checks payable to SIBN and mailed in advance to

Karen Fleming

1416 Godfrey Drive; Normal, IL 61761

(309)454-2513

e-mail: kfleming1973@gmail.com

Free Parking

South of the Marriott in the
connected parking garage only.

On this day in the Twin Cities, we affirm our support for women
around the world in our common pursuit of peace and prosperity,
and come together to learn from each other.

Like us on Facebook

McLean County International Women's Day

