



THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF McLEAN COUNTY

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The Voter

Of McLean County

Vol. 81 No. 6

March 2015

Save the Date:

Local Candidate Forums

Bloomington Ward 4 Primary – Tuesday, February 17

Normal Town Council – NEW DATE! – Tuesday, March 10

Bloomington City Council – Wednesday, March 18

- See page 4 for times and locations

Californians Would Be Jealous

Tuesday, February 24, 7:00 p.m.

- Normal Public Library Community Room, 206 W. College Ave.
- Water Resources in McLean County

International Women's Day Breakfast

Saturday, March 7, 8:30 a.m.

- Marriott Hotel & Conference Center, Uptown Normal
- Women's Health Across Cultures: Mind, Body, and Spirit
- **Reservations due by February 27.** Contact Karen Fleming from Soroptimist Intl. B-N by phone 309-454-2513 or [email](mailto:karen@soropt.org).

Living in B-N as an Undocumented Immigrant

Wednesday April 8, 5:00 p.m. – Drinks & Dialogue

- Marriott Hotel & Conference Center, Uptown Normal
- Chat with Jennifer Carrillo, from Illinois Peoples Action and a representative from the Immigration Project

Documented

Wednesday, April 8, 7:00 p.m.

- Normal Theater, 209 W. North St., Normal
- Film about Pulitzer Prize winning journalist Jose Antonio Vargas

LWV Annual Dinner & Silent Auction

Wednesday April 22

- Holiday Inn & Suites, Bloomington Airport
- The Innocence Project and one who was exonerated

From the Desk of Our President...

Last week at our monthly LWV Board meeting, we celebrated a milestone for our League. Over the past year, under the leadership of Membership Director Joe Gibson, 33 new members have joined our League, and several more who had become inactive once again joined our ranks. We are now 166 members strong, a true membership milestone for the McLean County League. And as we reflected upon priorities for our League, we went to our full membership roster and took stock of who we are as a League community. Immediately, we saw why our League has been becoming more vibrant over the last few years.

It comes down to this simple observation: we have an extremely active, engaged, and community-centric membership. The study of mental health services in McLean County did not end with the consensus we came to as a League; it continues on with an action focus led by League member Judy Buchanan. On Wednesday night this past week, League member Laura Furlong and several members of her study group on Affordable Housing in McLean County (most of them League members as well), met for Drinks and Dialogue at A Renée to talk about what they're learning (quite a bit as it turns out, so much so, this study will likely have a very long tail). And later this month, League member (and former League President) Anne Nadakavukaren will present the findings uncovered by her Water Resources study group.

As I've mentioned in this letter previously, our League's Observer Team has grown considerably this year, under the steady and creative leadership of its leader, Glen Ludwig. As Glen notes, voter apathy has many root causes, but one of them stems from lack of transparency in government, which erodes trust in our governmental bodies. So the Observer Team is tackling that issue head on, with excellent results.

On Saturday afternoon, I had the pleasure of meeting many members of the Multicultural Leadership Program (MCLP) at its 2015 Networking Fair. I was there to talk to them about what League does to contribute to the community. The members of this program are extremely impressive individually and collectively; participation in this year-long program requires a high degree of their discretionary effort in order to "learn and contribute to the community at large." I'm happy to report that many of the faces I saw at the Networking Fair – both this year's MCLP participants and the individuals from community programs who were invited – were also McLean County League of Women Voters members.

And so as I think about our League and its ongoing growth and vibrancy, I am reminded of the words of the LWV's founder, Carrie Chapman Catt, who saw the national organization she started and to which all of us belong, as "a mighty experiment to foster education in citizenship." In a conversation I had with an MCLP program participant about voter participation and its decline, she reminded me, "You need to reach the people who don't vote right where they're at, to find out why they don't vote." Indeed we do, and I believe we have the resources and talent within the McLean County League of Women Voters to take on that challenge.

-Maureen

Participate!

Californians Would Be Jealous: Water in McLean County – Tuesday, Feb 24

What's the state of our water resources in McLean County? Are the supply and quality going to be able to meet our demands?

Find out when the Water Resources Study reports its findings on **Tuesday, February 24, at 7:00 p.m. in the Normal Public Library Community Room.**

The Water Study Committee looked at communities throughout McLean County and collected information on their water supply outlook in the short and long term. Experts in the sciences, water treatment, and health were also interviewed to gather a better understanding of the entire picture. Come learn what they discovered! The presentation is open to the public.

International Women's Day Breakfast – Saturday, March 7

Once again, the League of Women Voters will be co-sponsoring with Soroptimist the International Women's Day Breakfast. This will take place on Saturday, **March 7, at the Uptown Marriott Hotel** with registration beginning at 8:30 a.m. We will have at least one table sponsored by the league.

This year's topic, *Women's Health Across Cultures: Mind, Body, Spirit*, will focus on total health – from learning the power of a smile, to physical health, to spiritual connections across the cultures. Dr. Mudita Dave will address these components, followed by table discussions and a report at the end of the event.

This year we will continue the discussion throughout the year with at least three events addressing women's health.

Individual tickets are \$25/each (students \$10). **Please email kfleming1973@gmail.com for reservations by February 27.** If you desire, let her know that you would like to sit at the League table. Special thanks go out to our early corporate sponsor – COUNTRY Insurance!

–Kathy Nicholson-Tosh

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In January, about 25 people join Drinks & Dialogue to talk about Affordable Housing at A. Renée (right)

Drinks & Dialogue: *Undocumented* Wednesday April 8, 5:00 p.m.



Our last Drinks and Dialogue this spring will be held on **Wednesday, April 8, at the Marriott** in uptown Normal (restaurant/ lounge area off the main lobby). Our topic is Undocumented Immigrants

in Bloomington/Normal and our discussion will be facilitated by Jennifer Carrillo, from Illinois Peoples Action, and a representative from the Immigration Project. We'll begin with a social time at 5:00 p.m. (note earlier start time) and discussion from 5:30-6:30 p.m. Bring a friend – we welcome members and non-members alike.

After the discussion, you are invited to the Normal Theater for the LWV viewing of the film, *Documented* at 7:00 pm. The Normal Theater is just a short distance from the Marriott, so it will be very convenient. We hope you can join us on April 8th for what promises to be an enlightening evening!

–Camille Taylor & Becky Hines

Documented: A film by an undocumented American – Wednesday April 8, 7:00 p.m.

Come to the Normal Theater for a special showing of the film that tells the story of Jose Antonio Vargas. The Pulitzer Prize winning journalist lived in the U.S. for years without knowing he was here illegally. The movie chronicles Vargas' journey to America from the Philippines as a child, his journey through America as an immigration activist, and the personal cost of his travels. It is co-sponsored by the Immigration Project, a nonprofit providing legal assistance to immigrants living in Central and Southern Illinois.

–Susan Alford



Election News

Upcoming Forums

Bloomington Ward 4 Primary – Tuesday, Feb. 17, 6:00 p.m. WGLT broadcasts a live forum from ISU's University Galleries with a rebroadcast at 11:00 a.m. on the 18th. LWV is a cosponsor of this forum to be moderated by Mike McCurdy. Scheduled to attend are Amelia Buragas, Jeremy Kelly, Chip Frank, and Dan Metz.

Normal Town Council – Tuesday, March 10, 6:00 p.m. LWV & WGLT will present a forum for Trustee candidates at the University Galleries at the corner of Broadway and Beaufort in Normal. Note the new date! This will be a live radio broadcast, with a rebroadcast at 11:00 a.m. on March 11 on WGLT's Sound Ideas. Three trustees will be elected to four-year terms to expire in 2019.

Submit questions for the candidates on the following webpage: <http://wgl.org/news/forums.shtml>.

Bloomington City Council – Wed., March 18, 7:00 p.m. in the Osborn Room of the Bloomington Police Department (305 S. East St.) LWV will hold a forum for Bloomington Alderman candidates. Wards 2, 4, 6 and 8 are in contention.

Get OUT and VOTE

City of Bloomington Ward 4 Primary:

-  **Tuesday, February 24** – Primary Election for Ward 4 Alderman. Ward 4 is comprised of precincts 1, 9 22, 24, 27 and 28.
-  **Watch for mailings for changes in voting location.** More information on the Bloomington Election Commission [website](#).

General Consolidated Election:

-  **Tuesday, April 7 – Consolidated Election**
-  Vote for Municipal Officials, School Boards, Park Districts, Libraries, and more.
-  **March 10** – Last day for registration or transfer of registration within the office of the election authority (Grace period registration and grace period voting begins March 11. See McLean County [website](#) for more detailed voting information.)
-  **March 23** – First day for early voting.

Nearly 30,000 Supporters Join LWVUS in Fighting Secret Money

From Renee Davidson's report on the LWVUS website:

The 2014 election was the most expensive midterm election in U.S. history, due to hundreds of millions of dollars of secret money donated through Super PACs. As a result, the voices of special interest groups are threatening to become louder than those of voters. That's why we've been pushing the Federal Election Commission (FEC) to pass critical campaign finance reforms to protect our political system from corruption.

After months of work, we're pleased to report that – with your help – the U.S. League submitted a total of nearly 30,000 public comments to the FEC in support of stopping the flood of dark money into our elections! Our comments called for stricter disclosure regulations as well as narrowing the definition of coordination between candidates and outside groups.

Five years ago, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled to open the floodgates to big money and special

interest with its decision in Citizens United v. FEC. The result of this decision led to the creation of Super PACs. Today, Super PACs and other outside groups can raise and spend unlimited amounts because they are supposedly "independent" from the candidates. But in reality, there are many ways to coordinate that are not blocked by the FEC's current weak regulations.

Your comments to the FEC underscore that you believe that Americans have a right to know who is funding our nation's political campaigns. Americans deserve a democracy that is free of political manipulation – one that is responsive to voters and not big money and special interests.

We're proud of the thousands of supporters across the country who are fighting for our democracy and pushing back against dark money. The stakes are too high, and the League will not stand by and let our political system be corrupted. Thank you for weighing in!

–Renee Davidson

Looking for Trust, Transparency in Government

On Sunday February 8, it was reported on NBC's Meet the Press that only 23% of Americans recently surveyed indicated they had solid trust of government in this country. When this data was sorted by age, those under 30 had significantly less trust than those older. While one might question the results, if it is even close to correct, it still is scary.

Locally, just read, listen, or watch the news for local examples of trust-eroding instances linked to government bodies or public employees. One needs a scorecard to track how many of our governors have served time in the clink.

On January 5th, I used the public comment portion of the agenda to speak to the McLean County Property committee. My motivation was to encourage more communication with citizens of McLean County on the process and progress of the project for the McLean County Detention Center upgrades. My remarks included: *"As I reflect on the recent past, it occurs to me that in many ways 2014 was a year of continuing erosion of trust in government. Many citizens seem to be frustrated, and are dropping out from active participation in our democracy. You can see this in voter turn-out and lack of candidates for elected positions.*

And, of course, contributing to the trust erosion is the dismal lack of ability or commitment by Illinois and our US government to address many real and often critical issues. All of this contributes to trust erosion for all governing bodies at all levels."



Glen Ludwig addresses the McLean County Board

My thought is that trust erosion often begins within a government body, when long-serving elected officials begin to assume the best governance can be conveniently delivered in an environment where there is limited need or obligation to actively engage constituents. As that occurs, meetings become short, routine, and often boring.

This leads to citizens who follow government action getting discouraged as they feel no one is listening. Some drop out as voters. Incumbents routinely get reelected and the strength of a truly effective and transparent democracy tends to further erode.

Sustainable trust (both in government and business) is earned and needs to be continually polished and nurtured by both performance and transparency.

I am a "short-timer" from a LWV observer perspective. I can assure you, and others on the Observer Team can confirm, that some government meetings are lacking transparency to the point of being BORING. But thankfully, the Observer Team keeps going back. Listening, taking notes and collecting data, which at some time in the future we can use to help government leaders to modify their routine and be more transparent when conducting the business of the people.

The payoff for transparency is big for three groups: (1) the government body will earn more trust, (2) our League is more aware of the best and the not so good governing bodies, with regards to citizen engagement, and finally (3) over the long pull citizen's trust and willingness to participate in local government will rally back to where it needs to be.

Observers are actively involved in a critical mission of helping polish government entities, to better serve current and future generations.

--Glen Ludwig

I join Uncle Sam in a tip of the hat to the commitment and efforts of our Observer Team. And yes, we do have openings for new Team members. For more details contact me, Glen Ludwig, at glen@creativeagsolutions.com.



Your Contributions Are Requested

What Local Issues Should We Study?

Once again, we are soliciting your ideas for issues you feel we need to study as a League. We've received two submissions after we posted this request in last month's *Voter*. However, there is still time to submit study requests. **Deadline for study requests is March 15, 2015.**

Please provide a brief description of the issue, what you see as the focus of the study, and who should participate. If you would like to lead the study, or have talked to someone else who would be willing to do so, please note that information as well. Requests should be sent to League President Maureen O'Keefe at mokbg@comcast.net.

Silent Auction Fundraiser

As we've announced, **the Annual Dinner/ Silent Auction will be held April 22.** If you have any services, crafts, art projects or gently used treasures you'd like to contribute to the Auction, please email your intention to Dianne Williamson at dwill2@comcast.net. Dianne is vacationing in the sunny South right now, but she'll work with her Bloomington-based committee to arrange pick-up of any items you have for the Auction.

If you're new to League and wonder what we mean by "services," we're talking about the wonderful talents of League members such as "Dinner by Camille," "Master Gardener for a Day," or "Learn to Play Chess." These are all greatly appreciated services which were donated by members in years past! It's a wonderful way to share your talents and meet new friends in League.

–Maureen O'Keefe

Active Studies

Corp for Supportive Housing to Speak to League Group

Please join the League of Women Voters Housing Study group as they welcome guest speakers Betsy Benito and Stephanie Sideman from the Corporation for Supportive Housing (CSH). CSH works nationally with communities to develop affordable housing. Presenters will be sharing current national trends and best practices with our group. There will also be a case study from a similar city, Bloomington, Indiana, to see how they addressed housing needs in their community.

Date: Thursday, March 5, 2015

Time: 10:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m.

Place: Baby Fold – Training Center
612 Oglesby Avenue, Normal

(When facing the building take the door to the right – follow the path)

RSVP: Karen Major- kmajor@thebabyfold.org

Orders are being taken for lunch from Avanti's for the meeting. If you would like to order an "Avanti's Gondola Sack" lunch consisting of a Gondola sandwich, chips and a cookie for \$5.00, contact Karen Major at kmajor@thebabyfold.org.

Orders must be placed by Thursday, February 26.

–Laura Furlong

Mental Health Study Takes Its Message to the Community

The action phase of the League of Women Voters Mental Health Study Committee continues. A PowerPoint presentation has been developed to highlight what was learned in the League's Mental Health Study and to overview what is being done by community stakeholders to enhance and improve mental health services in McLean County.

A training session will be held for the Study Committee members who will be making the presentations throughout the county beginning later this month.

A number of civic organizations and churches have already scheduled the presentation, which is 10-15 minutes in length. **Please let Judy Buchanan judyblm1@gmail.com or Julie Sullivan julianalou@aol.com know of any group interested in a presentation from one of our members.**

We want to keep this important conversation going and educate the community.

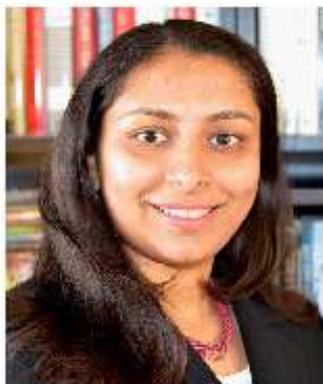
–Judy Buchanan

19th 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



Guest speaker:
Dr. Mudita Dave

Dr. Dave considers herself extremely lucky on account of many factors; a couple of them being in a family that thrives on lifelong learning, and to have had the opportunity of living and learning in two very diverse cultures; India as well as the United States. Dr. Dave earned her PHD in Community health from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign in 2013. Her research examines health behaviors and outcomes in relation to migration, acculturation, and gender among a diverse group of Asian Indians in the United States.

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

Women's Health Across Cultures: Mind, Body, and Spirit

Saturday, March 7, 2015

Uptown Normal Marriott

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

*Table Sponsors \$250/8 guests includes:
sponsor recognition at table & in event program.*

Tickets \$25 or \$10 students.

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

Reservations required, Deadline February 27.

FREE PARKING: South of the Marriott in the
connected parking garage only.



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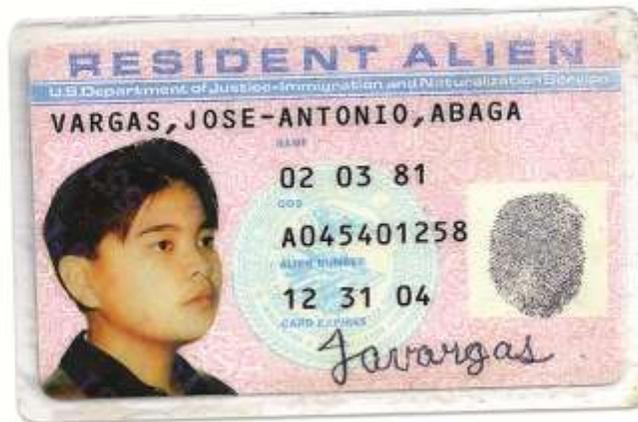


LEAGUE OF
WOMEN VOTERS®



DOCUMENTED

a film by an ~~illegal immigrant~~
undocumented American



One man's story.
A nation's journey.

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WRITTEN BY BRENDON ANDEREGG DIRECTED BY CLARISSA DE LOS REYES EDITED BY SABRINA SCHMIDT GORDON
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