



THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

OF McLEAN COUNTY

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The Voter of LWV of McLean Co. is published 9 times a year

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The Voter

Vol. 82 No. 8

May 2016

Save the Date:

Foreclosure Mediation in McLean County

Tuesday, April 19, 7:00 p.m.

- Normal Public Library Community Room
- How foreclosure mediation can affect your neighborhood: page 3

Drinks & Dialogue: Campaign Financing

Wednesday, April 20, 5:30 p.m.

- Michael's Restaurant, 110 W. Washington, Bloomington
- Led by Bob Bradley, political economics professor (ret): page 3

Drug Court Luncheon - Recovery Starts Today

Monday, April 25, 11:30 – 1:00p.m.

- Second Presbyterian Church, 313 N. East St., Bloomington
- For reservations contact Sally Rudolph at 309-663-5166 or LSRUDO@comcast.net by **Thursday, April 21**. See page 6.

Black Lives Matter: Listening to Our Neighbors

Tuesday, April 26, 7:00 – 8:45 p.m.

- Normal Public Library Community Room
- Diverse panel shares experiences to increase community interaction and understanding. Details on page 3.

Connecting the Dots: Moving from Information to Action on Community Mental Health

Tuesday, April 26, 4:30-6:30 p.m.

- ISU Alumni Center, 1101 N. Main St., Normal
- Explore how you can make a difference with Mental Health First Aid
- Sponsored by the Women to Women Giving Circle

Annual Meeting of the LWV of McLean County

Tuesday, May 24, 6:30 p.m.

- Government Center - Rm. 400, 115 E. Washington, Bloomington
- 2016-17 Studies, budget, and officers
- Leaguer of the Year Award
- Documentation for the meeting is on pages 7-12.

From Our President

May is just around the corner and we will be wrapping up our regular meetings for the year but, please note, we do intend to have some special events over the summer! So...please read your emails and watch for communications regarding summer activities.

Thank you to all who attended our Annual Dinner and Fundraiser on April 11th. We so enjoyed seeing everyone and hope you all were pleased with the insights of Judge Knecht. If you have suggestions for how we can improve this event or any other experience, please let us know. Also, if you would like to participate on event planning or any one of our other committees, please let one of the Board members know.

Our May annual meeting will be held on Tuesday, May 24th from 6:30 – 8:00 p.m. at the Government Center, Room 400. At that time we will approve our budget for 2016-17, review some of our program positions, discuss study ideas for next year, approve

our new officers, and announce our “Leaguer of the Year.” We hope you are able to attend.

Three of us will be participating in the League National Convention in Washington D.C. in June. Per the Convention website, the LWVUS Proposed Program for 2016-2018 includes a League-wide Campaign for Making Democracy Work[®], concurrence on the floor of convention with the proposed Redistricting position, concurrence on the floor of convention with the LWV Colorado Behavioral Health position and retaining all current LWVUS positions in the areas of Representative Government, International Relations, Natural Resources and Social Policy. All the materials related to these issues are available on the League website – www.lwv.org

Finally, I wish you a wonderful spring and look forward to seeing you at one of our remaining programs, at our May annual meeting, and over the summer at one of our special events!

Kathy

Annual Dinner

Once again our League of Women Voters Annual Dinner was a big success with over 90 attendees. During the buffet everyone had time to bid on the many silent auction items.

Judge James A. Knecht then took us through the interesting history of the Supreme Court and the American Judicial System. And he included some of the issues facing the court today.

Many thanks to my wonderful fundraising committee. Because of them the event ran smoothly. Mary Vogel, Pam Lubeck, Charlette Elm, Kathy Tosh, Maureen O’Keefe, Tami Foley--Thank You.

- Dianne Williamson

Help Wanted

Want to get more involved? Have hidden talents you’d like to put to use for the League? We are currently looking for members interested in the following positions:

- **Webmaster**
- **Observer Team Chair**

Professional experience not required!

Please call Kathy Tosh at 530-2050 if you are interested, or have someone you’d like to recommend.

Don’t delay – Respond today!

Programs: Things to Do, People to See

Foreclosure Mediation in McLean County, Tuesday, April 19

Is the foreclosure crisis over? Not in many areas, especially minority neighborhoods. Even after federal loss-mitigation programs became more effective, minorities faced greater obstacles qualifying for them. Mediation programs were then adopted as a leveling mechanism. While still in their infancy, early assessments suggest they are a promising way to reduce foreclosures and improve minority areas.

The McLean County Foreclosure Mediation Program is working to create change. Stacey Tutt, Associate Clinical Professor and Director of the Community Preservation Clinic at the University of Illinois Law School explains how.

The program is free of charge, and the public is welcome to attend on **Tuesday, April 19, 2016, 7:00 p.m. at the Normal Public Library Community Room**. Sponsored by the League of Women Voters of McLean County and the Central Illinois Chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union,

Legislator Interviews

Each year the LWVIL Issues Committee encourages local chapters to schedule interviews with our legislators. The primary purpose of the interview is to strengthen the line of communication and nurture the relationship with them.

We will plan to meet with:

- Senator Bill Brady
- Representative Dan Brady
- Senator Jason Barickman
- Representative Bill Mitchell
- Representative Keith Sommer

We like to have 3 or 4 people attend each interview. There is a standard set of questions that we send to the legislators in advance. I will publish the schedule of the interviews when they have responded.

If you would like to participate in any of the interviews please contact:

Judie Bey, judiebey@juno.com, 309-826-1774

Drinks & Dialogue, Wednesday, April 20



You won't want to miss the last Drinks & Dialogue of 2015-16! ISU Professor Emeritus, Bob Bradley, will lead a discussion on "Money and Politics." Considering the current presidential campaign, this should be quite an interesting discussion! Please join us at Michael's Restaurant, 110 W. Washington St. Bloomington, on Wednesday, April 20. **Social hour is 5:30-6:00 p.m. and the discussion is 6:00-7:00 p.m.**

Black Lives Matter: Listening to Our Neighbors, Tuesday April 26

What does it feel like to be living a "black life that matters" in Bloomington-Normal? Art Taylor (a Diversity and Inclusion Director at State Farm) will moderate a panel consisting of five African American Bloomington-Normal residents, including: an ex-offender from Labyrinth, a young social work grad student, and Dontae Latson, CEO of the YWCA.

This is not about criticism or debate or strategies for "fixing" - it is a conversation. Come and listen on **Tuesday, April 26, 2016, at 7:00 p.m. at the Normal Public Library Community Room**. Bring a friend, or a neighbor! Co-sponsored by: First Christian Church, The League of Women Voters, Not in Our Town, Unitarian Universalist Church of Bloomington-Normal.

Voter Services

Voter services will be taking a short break in major election activities and will start in mid-June to get ready for the general election in November. Watch for notices as we will need LOTS of help. In March, our primary pollwatchers included: Carol K. Baker, Judie Bey, Jana Edge, Carol Kerestes, Teri Liston, and Kathy Nicholson-Tosh.

Thanks once again for all of your help—especially to co-chair Teri Liston who is stepping back for a while. Thanks, Teri!

- Phylis VerSteegh

Studies & Action

EGI Study

The Exploring Government Initiative (EGI) Study is in the process of our final interviews of many McLean County governmental officials. So far, we have interviewed: 4 Mayors, 5 township Supervisors, 3 Libraries, 2 Drainage District officials, plus an attorney for several drainage districts, 1 Road Commissioner, 1 Fire District Chief, 1 Park District President, and 1 Water Authority official. We have also interviewed 2 city managers, the county Chief Assessment officer, the EDC President, the Executive Director of the Regional Planning commission, the Airport Authority manager, the Soil and Water Conservation District, the county engineer, the Water Reclamation District Manager and the transit manager.

Study members also attended the McLean County Elected (Township) Officials meeting and the McLean County Mayors Association meeting. Recently, some of the team leaders traveled to Springfield. We have been following an effort in Sangamon County called the Citizens Efficiency Commission (CEC). We were able to attend a meeting of this group which we found very interesting. Prior to their meeting, we met with Karen Hasara, a former Mayor of Springfield. She served both on the CEC mentioned above and the Lt. Governor's Task Force on Government Consolidation and Unfunded Mandates.

- Sally Rudolph, Study Committee Chair

Affordable Housing Study Group



The Affordable Housing group has certainly generated enthusiasm throughout the community. Meetings with community groups continue as we refine our action priorities.

Our next meeting is Thursday, April 28, 11:30 a.m. at The Baby Fold, 612 Oglesby Ave. Normal.

- Laura Furlong, Housing Study Co-Chair

May is Mental Health Month

- For over 65 years, Mental Health America, formerly Mental Health Association, has led the observance of *May Is Mental Health Month*. The organization welcomes other groups to join them in spreading the word that mental health is something everyone should care about. This year's theme is *Life with a Mental Illness* and will call upon individuals to share what life with a mental health challenge feels like to them in their own words or by submitting to Mental Health America anonymously. Posts will be displayed on a special page. Sharing is an important key to breaking down the stigma.

- Mental Health First Aid continues to provide basic understanding of mental and emotional challenges, the impact and how any of us can respond and help. In McLean County over 600 persons have been trained. A recent *Pantagraph* article covered the training that was done in the county. To be able to reach more people, additional local trainers were prepared by national staff. Trainings will be held during Mental Health Month; contact Advocate BroMenn or OSF for dates and times. The cost of the session is \$10.

- The LWV's Mental Health Action Speakers Bureau has made nearly 30 presentations to civic and service organizations, clubs, church groups and agencies. The Committee will meet this spring to discuss the next steps in their action to promote awareness and reduce stigma.

- Implementation strategies of the McLean County Mental Health Action Plan have begun. It is expected the Behavioral Health Coordinating Council will be appointed within the next months by County Board Chairman John McIntyre.

- Judy Buchanan, Mental Health Action Chair

Judge Knecht

Merrick Garland Deserves a Hearing

Attendees of this year's LWV of McLean County's Annual Dinner were treated to a speech by Fourth District Appellate Court Judge James Knecht. The



audience was entertained and educated by Knecht's look at the Supreme Court. Knecht, who has served on the appeals court for three decades, told a full house that President Obama's nominee to the U.S. Supreme Court deserves a nomination hearing.

Knecht lauded Senator Mark Kirk-R of Illinois for sitting down and talking with Merrick Garland while other GOP Leaders, including Senate Judiciary Chair, Chuck Grassley-R of Iowa, have been, in his words, "obstructionists." The judge pointed out that Alexander Hamilton, in the *Federalist Papers*, wanted an independent judiciary and believed the nomination by the president with the confirmation by the Senate was a balanced approach. Knecht said Hamilton, "could not possibly have foreseen the power of the Supreme Court in our age and he would have been more than disappointed to see the political wrangling about appointments today."

Judge Knecht's speech was loaded with historical perspective on Supreme Court appointments. For example, 42 Supreme Court justices were never judges but "It's the president's choice." And he said many justices on the high court had not been legal stars or Constitutional scholars. He punctuated the point by adding, "Clarence Thomas was neither but he was appointed nonetheless." Justices have been known to disappoint their presidents. Most recently Justice John Roberts supported the Affordable Care Act (Obamacare) and yet was appointed by Republican George W. Bush.

Putting today's wrangling about the Garland nomination in further historical perspective, Knecht reminded the audience that 22 Supreme Court nominations have been made during election years and that President Lincoln used a Congressional recess to appoint to the court, Bloomington's most famous son, Supreme Court Justice David Davis. According to Judge Knecht, conservatives often complain they don't want a judicial activist on the


high court. "What is an activist?" Knecht said, "It's really someone who disagrees with my point of view." Knecht's definition of activism is when justices strike down a law as unconstitutional. The laws represent the will of the people, he said, yet 75 percent of laws passed in the last 20 years have been struck down by the highest court. "Would it surprise you to know," Knecht asked the gathering, "that Clarence Thomas voted to strike down over 65 percent of those laws or that Justice Scalia voted to strike down 57 percent of the laws that came before them?" Congress is part of a representative democracy, said Knecht, "It's not perfect but over 65 percent wrong? Nobody could be *that* wrong that often."

- Colleen Reynolds

Judge Knecht (center) talks with LWV members Mike Kerber (left) and Lee Rudolph



Panel Discussion:



BLACK LIVES MATTER
LISTENING TO OUR NEIGHBORS

Tuesday
April 26
7:00 PM

Normal Public Library
Community Room

Join us!
Listen compassionately!

Hear what it feels like to live a "Black Life That Matters" in our community.

Moderator:
Diversity Trainer Art Taylor

Panelists:
Michael Donnelly Martha Hunter
Gaynett Hoakins Dontae Latson
Sharon Warren

Co-sponsored by:
First Christian Church
The League of Women Voters
Not In Our Town
Unitarian Universalist Church of Bloomington-Normal
YWCA McLean County

Presented by the B-N Humanist group
which meets at the UU B-N Church,
1613 E. Emerson St.

The Politics of Immigration

Fred Tsao, Senior Policy Counsel at the Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights (ICIRR), gave an historical perspective of immigration, plus the current picture, to an interested group at the League program on April 5th. Fred noted that people mainly move for three reasons – love, work and fear. But only certain categories of people *can* immigrate, and then it may take a long time. For example, the wait for a parent to petition an adult child living in Mexico is twenty years.

Immigration from Mexico has fluctuated over the years. During World War I, the U.S. needed laborers, and Mexicans immigrated. When the Depression hit, immigrants were sent back. During WW II, labor was again needed. Mexicans were recruited, only to be experience mass deportations in the mid-50’s with “Operation Wetback.” 1986 brought amnesty. Further actions such as NAFTA and “the wall” contributed to greater unlawful immigration, *plus* laws made it more difficult to gain legal status. The unintended consequence was that the historical circular migration between Mexico and the U.S. has been interrupted.

The current administration has been of two minds. More than 2.5 million people have been

deported during President Obama’s term, which is a record number. There have been more criminal prosecutions for illegal entry or re-entry. On the other hand, due to Congressional inaction in “fixing our broken immigration system,” Obama initiated DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals), which temporarily exempts qualified individuals from deportation and allows a renewable two-year work permit. 800,000 individuals have qualified so far.

The more recently announced expansion of the DACA program and introduction of DAPA (Deferred Action for Parents of Americans and Lawful Permanent Residents), are currently blocked from implementation by a U.S. District Court ruling, which was upheld in Circuit Court. It is estimated that 4 million out of the 11 million undocumented people in the U.S. would qualify for DAPA. The Supreme Court has agreed to hear the case against the executive action, and their ruling, expected in June, is eagerly anticipated.



- Alexis Kalish & Christine Howe

recovery
starts today

McLean County Drug Court & Recovery Starts Today, Inc

Ninth Annual Fundraising Luncheon

Monday, April 25, 2016 from 11:30am to 1:00pm
Second Presbyterian Church
313 N. East Street
Bloomington, IL

Tickets are \$35 each or \$260 for a table of 8

Recovery Starts Today, Inc increases program awareness, financial resources, and accessibility to community resources for the McLean County Drug Court and its participants. The primary goal of Recovery Starts Today, Inc is to support the continued development of the McLean County Drug Court Program to assist its participants on a successful path to recovery.

Recovery Starts Today

Documents For the Annual Meeting

LWV of McLean County 2016-2017 Programs

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

The League of Women Voters of McLean County supports the assessment and development of affordable, supportive, permanent housing opportunities for all citizens of McLean County.

To achieve and sustain this goal, the League supports:

- *Providing permanent and/or supportive housing options that address the wide spectrum of socio-economic needs of impacted citizens including—but not limited to—factors such as age, family size, mental health, disabilities, addictions, the specific needs of veterans, etc.*
- *Securing adequate financial resources (local, state, federal, and private funding sources) to adequately address the supportive, permanent housing needs within our community.*

The League endorses and encourages intentional and ongoing collaboration, leadership, coordination, and community engagement to achieve and sustain this goal.

COUNTY GOVERNMENT (Adopted 2014, retained through 2016)

Administration

League supports:

- Appointment of all administrative personnel;
- Election of all policymakers County Board

County Board

League supports:

- Review of the general structure, procedures, committee structure, districts and size with a view toward greater transparency, accessibility to the public and more effective communication within the board;
- Production of a five-year strategic plan required of all county department heads, including budget provisions; presentation of these plans each year to the county board as part of the budget process for accountability purposes;
- Pursuance of intergovernmental agreements that address the issue of land annexation, including transferring road maintenance to the annexing body.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN FOR McLean COUNTY (Adopted 2005, retained through 2016)

League supports:

- A written plan accompanied by maps;
- Development of community support;
- Preservation of natural resources and prime agricultural land;
- Enforceable land use ordinances.

CRIMINAL AND CIVIL JUSTICE (replaces/revises Options for Justice)

The League of Women Voters of McLean County supports implementing and/or enhancing a wide array of viable measures in order to: decrease incarceration rates for low-risk, first-time offenders, provide alternatives to jail where warranted, and increase options for justice in criminal and/or civil matters brought before the Courts as follows:

Alternatives to Jail Measures:

League endorses:

- *Continuing efforts to maintain a Drug Court Program, Mental Health Court Program, GPS electronic monitoring, and the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council and its committees.*
- *Implementing the following: Restorative Justice programs and appropriate supervision and treatment of offenders in community-based programs based upon risks and needs assessments*
- *Supporting diversions for low-risk, first-time offenders through Drug Court and Mental Health Court*
- *Increasing community-based supervision in lieu of incarceration, including housing, job-training, and cognitive-behavioral therapy*

Incarceration and Ex-Offender Measures:

League endorses:

- *Improving support in jail: education and life skills programs, mental health and substance abuse treatment*
- *Reducing obstacles to restoring ex-offenders to become productive citizens by providing an effective, wide array of community services and supervision*
- *Improving re-entry of ex-offenders into the community by increasing collaboration and cooperation among social services agencies*

Juvenile Justice Measures:

League endorses:

- *Implementing improvements to juvenile justice with appropriate efforts aimed at doing everything possible to keep young people from entering a juvenile facility; diversion and services are key to doing so.*
- *Encouraging cooperation and coordination among agencies and government officials who work with juveniles (formerly Juvenile Justice position)*

ELECTION COMMISSION (Adopted 2009, retained through 2016)

McLean County should unify its election offices in a County Election Commission.

EMERGENCY HEALTH CARE (Adopted 2004, retained through 2016)

League supports a paramedic service for Bloomington-Normal, funded by a combination of government. League opposes a separate taxing district or special assessment for paramedic service.

HOME RULE FORM OF GOVERNMENT FOR BLOOMINGTON-NORMAL (Adopted 2004, retained through 2016)

League strongly supports provisions in the 1970 Illinois Constitution that allow certain local governments to adopt home rule and opposes any attempt to restrict this option.

JUVENILE JUSTICE/CHILD WELFARE (Adopted 2000...noted in History of Programs - retained through 2016)

Current: League supports cooperation and coordination among agencies and government officials who work with juveniles.

Proposed: Update and combine with Criminal and Civil Justice

LIVING WAGE (Adopted 2009, retained through 2016)

League supports a living wage for all City of Bloomington employees.

LOCAL EDUCATION (Adopted 2005, retained through 2016)

League supports:

- Broadly-based measurement of student achievement by teachers and administrators;
- Frequent teacher evaluation by principals or department heads;
- A diverse curriculum made possible, if necessary, by an extended school day.
- Organization of districts for educational benefits to students, administrative efficiency and economy;
- A financial basis for schools in McLean County that can provide a good education for all students.

LOCAL MENTAL HEALTH (Adopted 2000, revised 2014, retained through 2016)

League supports:

- Proactive core leadership, planning, coordination, and collaboration for mental health services in McLean County
- Funding which is effective to meet the needs for a comprehensive continuum of mental health services in McLean County
- Cradle to grave mental health services for all individuals in McLean County

OPTIONS FOR JUSTICE (Adopted 2011, retained through 2016)

Current: League endorses:

- *Support efforts to maintain a Drug Court Program, Mental Health Court Program, GPS electronic monitoring, and the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council and its committees.*
- *Victim-Offender Mediation, Day Reporting Center, and 24-hour probation reporting kiosk.*

Proposed: Updated and combine with Criminal and Civil Justice

PUBLIC HEALTH (Adopted 2004, retained through 2016)

League supports the following:

Financing the McLean County Health Department

- Primary support from the State of Illinois;
- Increase of the current limit on the local county tax level for the Health Department.

Hiring Practices for the Health Department

- State set minimum standards;
- Open hiring policy, including an equal opportunity statement.

Services

- Continuous evaluation of needs and monitoring of existing programs;
- High priority on services to low-income families;
- Cooperation and coordination between the Department of Public Health and mental health services

Selection of New Board Members

- County-wide representation;
- Unlimited number of terms for members;
- Application for appointment through the County Board.

Keeping the Public Informed

- Filing of reports in the public libraries;
- Publicizing of services available;
- Publication of board meeting times.

PUBLIC RECREATION (Adopted 2005, retained through 2016)

League endorses:

- Continuous maintenance and improvements of recreational facilities (national standards based on population are an appropriate goal)
- Continued development of a wide variety of recreational programs for all age levels
- Cooperation among government units whenever possible.

SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT (Adopted 2009, retained through 2016)

League supports an integrated solid waste management strategy that encourages a regional approach to ensure maximum waste reduction, adequate disposal capacity, recycling/reuse program for the entire community.

WATER CONSERVATION (adopted through 2016)

League supports:

- Government action to promote water conservation
- Public education about the need for conservation
- Fair rate system that encourages conservation

LWV of McLean County 2016-2017 Annual Budget

BUDGET CATEGORY	Year		Difference
	2015-2016	2016-2017	
Beginning Balance General Account Checking			
Included in Checking Balance- Judicial Grant \$1,846.98	\$13,657.75	\$14,548.23	
INCOME		<i>(projections)</i>	
Dues paid @ \$65.00 Full/\$30.00 for Second	\$10,455	\$10,455	
Member Count @ \$65	141	141	
Member Count @ \$30	43	43	
Members' Contributions	\$400	\$400	
Money Making Projects (Dinner, wine tasting, etc.)	\$10,800	\$10,800	
Total Income	\$35,312.75	\$36,203.23	
Profit from Money Making Projects	\$4,300.00	\$4,300.00	
EXPENDITURES			
Advocacy Action (outcome from studies, legislative interviews, etc.)	\$500	\$500	
Awards/Gifts (Leaguer of the Year, Proj of Year, etc.)	\$200	\$250	\$50
Chamber of Commerce Dues	\$250	\$250	
Community Education	\$1,400	\$1,000	-\$400
Convention	\$3,000	\$3,000	
Insurance	\$150	\$350	\$200
Internet Site and PayPal	\$450	\$450	
LWVIL PMP (Illinois Per Member Payment)	\$3,800	\$3,800	
LWVUS PMP (National Per Member Payment)	\$4,500	\$4,500	
Meeting Expenses	\$400	\$400	
Membership and Kick Off Event	\$500	\$750	\$250
Money making projects/Events	\$6,500	\$6,500	
Observer	\$250	\$250	
Partnerships		\$1,000	\$1,000
Postage/Communications	\$200	\$200	
Publicity	\$150	\$150	

--Continued on next page--

Studies	\$200	\$200	
Total Printing (Calendars, parade, placards, name tags, biz cards, etc.)	\$300	\$700	\$400
Voter Services (Cards for voting)	\$500	\$500	
Workshops (MLD, Chamber Candidate Interviews, issues briefing, etc.)	\$450	\$850	\$400
Total Amount of Budgeted Funds	\$23,250	\$24,750	\$1,500
Funds Not Allocated to Specific Line Items	\$12,062.75	\$11,453.23	
Total Expenditures	\$35,312.75	\$36,203.23	
LWVIL Education Fund	\$1,448.74	\$1,973.74	\$525

Board Positions

The following Board Positions will be approved at the Annual Meeting:

- Secretary
- Treasurer
- Membership Chair
- Action Chair