

LWW LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® of Greater Rockford, Illinois VOTER

<http://www.lwvgr.org>

Link-Enhanced PDF

February 2016

The purpose of the LWVGR shall be to promote political responsibility through informed and active participation of citizens in government and to act on selected governmental issues.

It's easy to stay connected to the League:

Email:

lwvgr22@gmail.com

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Facebook:

LeagueofWomenVotersofGreaterRockfordIllinois - (one word).

•

Twitter

#LWVGR

•

Website:

<http://www.lwvgr.org>

Event and meeting calendar available.

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Listserver:

LWVGR has a private email listserver for members only. If you have an email change, email to: janiewc@mac.com.

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Newsletter mailing list:

If you prefer to receive mailed copies of the *VOTER* newsletter, just pay the \$12.00 fee.

Go the website and the option is on the membership renewal page.

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Paypal:

You can now join/renew on our website, using the mail form or Paypal! You can also make donations using Paypal.

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Tell your friends!

Do you know someone who might be interested in joining?

Please introduce them to our social media.

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LWVGR Mailing Address:

4990 East State Street
Rockford, IL 61114

League of Women Voters of Greater Rockford
Environmental Committee presents

SO, HOW IS THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER?

...and why should we care?

Speaker: Bonnie Cox is a founding member and current President of the LWV of JoDavie County.

She is a LWVIL state board member.

She is also a board member of the LWV-UMRR ILO. (League of Women Voters-Upper Mississippi River Region Inter League Organization). Our League joined this ILO last year.

Please, come learn about the natural resource issues facing all of us regarding our water.

March 8, 2016 6:00 p.m.

YWCA

**4990 East State Street
Rockford Illinois**

Monthly LWVGR membership meetings are second Tuesday of every month, 6:00 p.m., YWCA, 4990 E. State Street, Rockford

The Board of Directors for the League of Women Voters of Greater Rockford meets the second Monday of the month at 5:30pm, at the home of Vice-President Christina Hiltrop, 2606 Point O' Woods, Rockford, 61114.

Any member is welcome at Board meetings.

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President's Report

Claire McIntyre, LWVGR President

The days are getting longer and we're beginning to see the tail end of winter; something for which we're all grateful. February also brings primary season into sharp focus as our Voter Service committee worked hard to register as many voters as possible. Please don't forget to vote.

Our February meeting featured Dr. Linda Oshita who spoke on Illinois



Vision 20/20. Her overall take on it was that it had already begun to produce results, such as passed legislation easing teacher license transferrals from other states, and will continue to have a significant impact on further legislation addressing public education.

Upcoming March and April League meetings will be particularly interesting. In March, Bonnie Cox from the Jo Daviess League will discuss the new Mississippi River ILO. LWVGR joined this important Inter-League Organization in June, 2015 as we recognize the importance of a healthy

Mississippi watershed. Bonnie will discuss the goals of and impact the new ILO hopes to make as well as Mississippi watershed's significance to our lives. Please put March 8th on your calendar. In April, the Health Committee will put the results of the Winnebago Health Department's community survey in the spotlight. Please put April 12th on your calendar as a date not to be missed. More information will follow.

On the statewide level, our League continues to work with the Responsible Budget Coalition to end the budget impasse. With the spring session of the General Assembly set to begin soon and a FY 2016 budget that still needs to be passed, there will be requests from the state issues specialists for your help in advocating for League positions. The League needs your help more than ever to let our legislators and leaders know that the state of the state is not acceptable. A quick phone call or an email is all it takes.

The Board of Directors has been working to clarify League roles and put other helpful information into a handbook for new Board members, committee chairs, and for new League members. Although we set yearly program and goals, we felt clarification of duties would help the League function more smoothly, especially as new people move into leadership roles. It should be ready to share with you by the Annual Meeting.

Keep warm and think Spring!

Campaign Finance Reform Committee

Elizabeth Lindquist, chair

Campaign Finance Reform:

The CFR Committee has been canceled this month and next. We will meet again in April.



MEETINGS:

VOTER SERVICE COMMITTEE:

1st Thursday of the month, 8am
Mary's Market
2636 McFarland Road
Rockford, IL 61107

LWVGR BOARD MEETING:

2nd Monday of the month, 5:30pm
home of Christina Hiltrop
2606 Point O' Woods
Rockford, IL 61114
All are welcome.

HEALTH CARE COMMITTEE:

3rd Thursday of the month, 5:30pm
P.A. Peterson Ctr. for Health Library
1311 Parkview Avenue
Rockford, IL 61107

LOCAL GOVERNMENT:

2nd Wednesday of the month, at noon
Katie's Cup
502 7th Street
Rockford, IL 61104.

EDUCATION:

3rd Tuesday of the month, 9am
Stockholm Inn
Rockford Plaza
2420 Charles Street
Rockford, IL 61108

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES:

4th Tuesday of the month, 11:30am
Katie's Cup
502 7th Street
Rockford, IL 61104

COMMUNICATIONS:

2nd Tuesday of the month
Katie's Cup, 502 7th Street
Rockford, IL 61104

MEMBER SERVICES:

3rd Friday of the month, 11:30am
Thai Hut
Sandy Hollow Road
west of 11th Street
Rockford, IL 61109

CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM:

3rd Thursday of the month, 6pm
Meg's Daily Grind
3885 N Perryville Road
Rockford, IL 61114

LWVGR MONTHLY MEETINGS

March 8, 2016, 6-8pm
YWCA
4990 East State Street,
Rockford, IL 61114
Open to the Public.

Communications Committee

June Jacobs, chair

Our *VOTERS* continue to go out monthly and are chock full of good information. Your feedback is always welcome. Is there something you would like us to cover? An article you would like to submit? Photos of League events, such as voter registration activities, are particularly welcome. Please let our Voter Editor Janie Wilson-Cook know if you have something. If you're not sure how to submit it, she can help. Thank you.

Our latest article on the impact of cuts to the MAP grants for college students appeared in the Rockford Register Star on Sunday, Feb. 6th. You can read it here and it will also be posted on our Facebook page: <http://www.rrostar.com/article/20160206/OPINION/160209614>

A portion of our column on the impact of the budget impasse on women was featured in the Illinois political blog, *Capitol Fax*. Although it was attributed to LWVIL instead of LWVGR, it was still a nice shout out to the League. You may read the article and following comments here: <http://capitolfax.com/wp-mobile.php?p=27594&more=1>

Education Committee

Glenda Shaffer, chair

The committee did not meet in February. The Education Committee presented the informational discussion on *Vision 20/20: Fulfilling the Promise of Public Education* at the February League meeting. Dr. Linda Oshita was our speaker. She presented a PowerPoint on the goals and promise of Vision 20/20 and answered audience questions. She also addressed the use of Title 1 funds, which has been contentious as the downstate districts must pay a surcharge on the hiring of special education teachers which goes towards pension debt. This is money that is supposed to go to districts with a high concentration of low income families to help close the achievement gap.

Illinois is one of the most regressive states in the country when it comes to funding our schools, depending heavily on local property taxes. Illinois ranks dead last when it comes to state funding support of schools. Currently, less than 27% of school funding comes from the state, down from a one time high of almost 49%. (As stated in the Illinois Constitution, the state is primarily responsible for funding education.) The result is the districts with the lowest property values which must depend on state funds often struggle to fund their schools compared to property-wealthy districts, which receive less state funding but have the property tax base to fully fund their schools.

There have been recent attempts to revamp the current school funding formula which have not passed or gotten lost in the noise of the budget impasse. Saying that Illinois' prosperity is tied to the success of its schools, Illinois Senate President John Cullerton has vowed to tie major legislation to school funding reform, much like the Governor's vow to tie the budget to his Turnaround Agenda. LWVIL and local Leagues will follow these developments closely and ask for your help in [reaching out to our legislators](#).



Environmental Issues Committee

Diane Cushing, chair

The EIC is planning the March 8 League monthly meeting (SO, HOW IS THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER? ...and why should we care?) We are sending PR to “green” organizations. The LWVGR joined the LWV-UMRR ILO and thus Bonnie Cox, a board member, will be speaking to us about the Upper Mississippi River Region. Bonnie is also the President of the LWV of JoDaviess County.

Fundraising Committee

Joel Cowen, chair

Although the League has successfully ensured the continuation of the LWVGR Scholarship Fund thanks to your generosity, our last general fundraiser to pay for educational materials and operating costs was in 2005. In short, the funds that allow us to register voters, educate the public and metaphorically ‘keep the lights on’ are running low. We often rely on individual members to pay for costs that should come out of our general operating or educational funds. The board has approved a fundraiser to address these needs. League member Doug Scott has arranged for Cook County Sheriff Tom Dart, a nationally known speaker, to speak at a fundraiser in October of 2016. His particular passion is the misuse of correctional facilities as warehousing for the mentally ill. He has also spoken out on the lack of mental health care, social programs, and adequate training for police officers to handle hot button situations in Illinois. We feel Mr. Dart will be a big draw. The committee has met several times and is beginning to ramp up. We welcome new committee members. Please contact Joel Cowen (joel.b.cowen@gmail.com) or Elaine Pfluger (elainepfluger818@comcast.net) if you are interested in participating.

Healthcare Committee

Elaine Pfluger, chair

Don't miss the April 12 LWVGR monthly program at the YWCA!

The Winnebago County Mental Health Committee will have the preliminary results of the Behavior Health Survey distributed in August 2015. The National Alliance of Mental Illness (NAMI) will be cosponsor with the LWVGR Health Committee presenting the program. We are expecting 200 people to attend and have rented both rooms at the YWCA. Dr. Sandra Martell, Winnebago County Public Health Administrator, will give the Introduction and Background of the Behavioral Health Survey followed by a three-member panel representing the Mental Health Advisory Committee Data Subcommittee, Mental Health Advisory Committee Funding Subcommittee and NAMI Consumer Overview Adult and pediatric perspective will give timed presentations. Questions and Answers (on cards) will close the program by 8:00 p.m.

What: Winnebago County Mental Health Survey results and panel discussion

When: Tuesday April 12, 2016

Time: 6:00- 8:00 p.m.

Location: YWCA Nicholas Conference Center 4990 E. State St. (Rockford University entrance)

Publicity is through social/electronic media - Winnebago County Health Department, NAMI, and LWVGR.

Local Government Committee

Paula Lind, chair

The two anticipated primary forums at Rockford University and Signal Hill Neighborhood Association were canceled due to Chairman Christiansen's announcement to retire rather than run for re-election.

WREX-TV Channel 13, Rockford University, and Signal Hill Neighborhood Association, are very interested in partnering with the League in September/October for General Election Forums.

Paula and Susan Janson will again meet with the City and County Election offices this summer to annually record their progress on the League's Recommendations for Election Services.

Paula made copies of the Civic Federation Summary of Local Government Consolidation for the members to review. Committee will discuss further at their next meeting on March 9, 2016 at Noon at Katie's Cup.

LWVGR Scholarship Committee

Janie Wilson-Cook, coordinator

The Community Foundation of Northern Illinois (CFNIL) scholarship program will start looking at application forms April 1. Small committees of 3-5 people will be deciding for over 80 scholarships. Last year the LWVGR Scholarship had 66 applicants.

Membership Committee

Diane Cushing, chair

We will be having a new member get together on March 19, 2016, 9:00 a.m at the home of Diane Cushing (4849 Danforth Dr., Rockford). LWVGR board members and committee chairs are encouraged to attend. Please RSVP to Diane at dlcfec@gmail.com or 815-543-2513

Sunshine Committee

Alice Heath, chair

Please let me know ASAP the nature of the event and the name, address, phone number, and email address of the person by emailing me at: afh1017@gmail.com or by phone, 815-399-7117 with as much information as possible. You can leave a detailed message on my recorder if that is easier for you. We want to share our concerns with our members and let them know we are thinking of them. Thank you!

Voter Service Committee

Susan Janson, chair

Our Deputy Registrars have been very busy taking registrations at ten area high schools, Rockford University, Rock Valley College, and four Schnuck's grocery stores. Thus far in this election year, we have taken 509 registrations, 430 in schools and 79 in stores. Many of those we registered are 17 year olds who will be able to vote in the March 15th Primary.

We also distributed 375 Election Guides to all of the area schools and answered countless questions about voter registration and the elections.

Our Deputy Registrars Alice Heath, Diane Cushing, Jane Kelley, Elsie Janson, Faye Marcus, Wanda Hoover, Maxine Hadley, Adrienne Langley, June Jacob, Glenda Shaver, and Teresa Hill gave freely of their time to help with our success.

We are very lucky to welcome two new Deputy Registrars, Emily Lindquist and Mackenzie Peshek who are students at Rock Valley. They enthusiastically registered their fellow students at RVC and also stepped up to volunteer at a grocery store.

Thank you to all of those who helped. This year we had a lot of help from teachers, principals and academy coaches who prepared students in advance which was extremely helpful. Thanks again also to Schnuck's for allowing us to set up in their stores.

Many of you have said that getting young people registered to vote is one of the most rewarding and fun jobs in the League. If anyone else would like to join us, we will be setting up classes after the March election. In April we will have another opportunity when we will be registering new citizens-another great experience. Our committee meets the first Thursday of each month at Mary's Market on MacFarland Rd at 8AM. Everyone is welcome to join us.

League of Women Voters of Illinois Annual Issues Briefing

The 2016 LWVIL Issues Briefing was held February 27th. The remarkable program began with plenary speaker Congresswoman Robin Kelly, who shared national plans for gun violence prevention. Go to <http://www.lwvil.org/issuesbriefing.html> for more updates and photos in the days to come.



LWVIL Issues Co-Chairs, Jean Pierce (left) and Hilary Denk (right) join U.S. Representative Robin Kelly





AmazonSmile helps you contribute to the Education Fund

The LWVGR Board recently approved the ability for our membership to contribute to the Education Fund through their purchases at Amazon.com.

On your first visit to AmazonSmile, smile.amazon.com, you are prompted to select a charitable organization from our list of eligible organizations. You can change your selection at any time.

To change your charitable organization:

1. Sign in to smile.amazon.com on your desktop or mobile phone browser.
2. From your desktop, go to *Your Account* from the navigation at the top of any page, and then select the option to *Change your Charity*. Or, from your mobile browser, select *Change your Charity* from the options at the bottom of the page.
3. Select a new charitable organization to support. In this case choose “League of Women Voters of Illinois Education Fund”.



For more information about the AmazonSmile program, go to <http://smile.amazon.com/about>.

Phonathon 2016

LWVGR will participate in the state-wide effort to support LWVIL programs and activities by soliciting donations from our membership. LWVIL initiates the effort by mailing solicitation letters and the local leagues participate by making follow up calls at the Phonathon. Local leagues that participate in the Phonathon are eligible to receive a share of the donations made to LWVIL or to the LWVIL Education Fund.

The local League will participate in making calls during April, 2016, any donations received by LWVIL from members of your local League between December 1, 2015 and May 23, 2016 will be counted toward the total member support donations on which your share is based.

For 2016, the sharing percentage is 15%. For example, if members of your league contribute a total of \$300 to LWVIL between December 1, 2015 and May 23, 2016, your league would receive \$45.

Expect more details about the specific date. Phonathons in the past have been full of fun and camaraderie.



Change your email address?
Be sure to contact Janie Wilson-Cook at janiewc@mac.com
Don't miss your League emails!

Please send in your Membership renewal today!
We still have several members needing to renew.
If you have questions or are unsure of your renewal status, please email Treasurer Martha Pippitt at dpippitt@sbcglobal.net or call her at 815-636-1974.
You can download the form and mail the renewal to her address and/or use Paypal from our website:
http://www.lwvgr.org/join_form.html