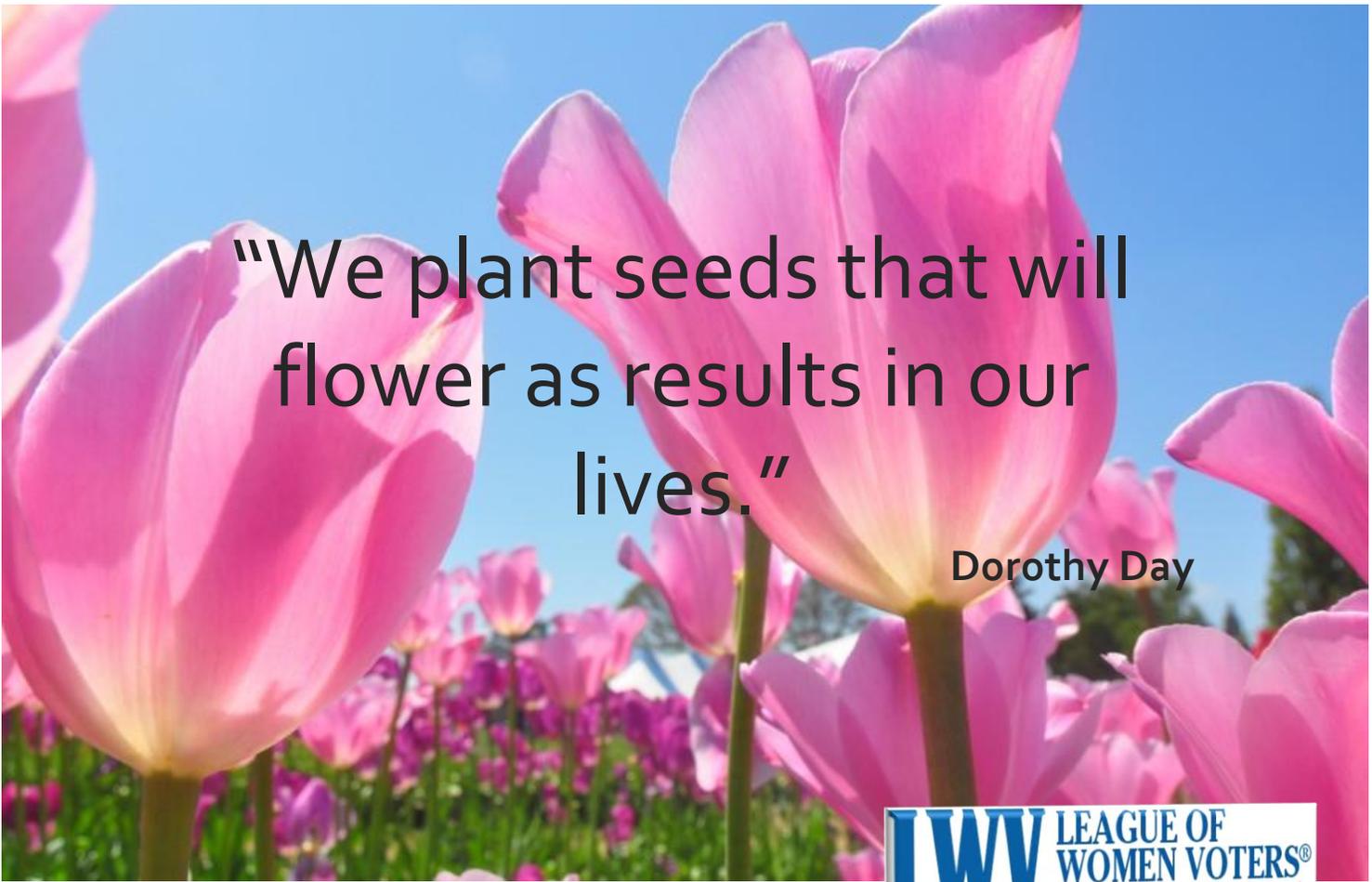


“We plant seeds that will
flower as results in our
lives.”

Dorothy Day



May 2018

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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

•

Facebook:

LeagueofWomenVotersofGreaterRockford
Illinois - (one word).

•

Twitter

#LWVGR

•

Website:

<http://www.lwvgr.org>

Event and meeting calendar available.

•

Listserver:

LWVGR has a private email listserver for members only. If you have an email change, email to: webmaster@lwvgr.net

•

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.

•

Paypal:

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

•

Tell your friends!

Do you know someone who might be interested in joining?
Please introduce them to our social media.

•

LWVGR Mailing Address:

4990 East State Street
Rockford, IL 61108

Welcome!

Invite a friend



Message from the Editor: Apologies, but if you have emailed me at newsletter@lwvgr.net, I am having technical difficulties at this time and have not received your email in time for this edition. I will have to add your submission to the next Voter.

If you have questions about membership, please email our Membership Chair, Diane Cushing:

membership@lwvgr.net

You can download the form and mail the sign up form to her address and/or use Paypal from our website:

[SIGN UP FORM](#)

Please note that League membership is only possible by paying dues to a local affiliate.

LWVGR member highlight – Ann Dempsey



Q-Why did you choose to get involved in the LWV and the committees that you are on?

Joining the League of Women Voters of Greater Rockford was one of my first community engagement decisions after graduating from law school and returning to Rockford in the early 1990's. I knew the League represented my commitment to participatory democracy and promoting voting and I have been a member ever since.

Q- Tell us about yourself and please share some of your career highlights.

I have practiced law with the private firm of Oliver Close, LLC since 1990 with a focus on civil litigation, general business and estate planning. One of my favorite litigation experiences actually involved some League friends. It was in 1994 and the trial was starting before the Honorable Judge Alford Penniman. As the Judge was speaking,

two people entered the courtroom to observe the trial. The Judge stopped the proceedings and said "Good morning ladies, please come in and have a seat." The observers were Vivian Hickey and Miriam Tunison. They told me later that they knew Judge Penniman's mother from Rockford College. That was the only time I had ever saw a judge stop to acknowledge and greet someone during a trial.

Q-What are some of your favorite memories with LWV?

One of my favorite League experiences was in the 1990's when we "observed" different government boards to evaluate the opportunity for public participation. I was assigned to Rockford City Council with Sharon Garcia. I also participated in the League's study on the consolidation of the election services provided by the Rockford Board of Elections and the County Clerk's office and an update of that study. Over the years, my League involvement has varied based on other commitments with family and work but most of my interest has been with the Local Government Committee and I served as President from 2014 to 2015.

It is gratifying to see the positive leadership role that the League has in this community from hosting candidate forums to publishing well informed positions in the Register Star column. For me, one of the greatest benefits of being in the League has been the friendships that I have made which are too many to mention. Sadly, several of those friends have passed away in the last few years including: Joyce Holmberg, Miriam Tunison and Vivian Hickey. They were role model leaders for me and now it is up to the next generation to be leaders.

Q-What would be your most important advice for the next generation?

My hope for the next generation is that young people will get involved in something they feel passionate about.

Presidents Report

Claire McIntyre, Chris Hiltrop, Co-Presidents



passed.

urge her to press her colleagues to pass the resolution. Then call your representative to let him know how much this bill means to you as their constituent. We are so close.

If you doubt that your call will make it difference, consider SB 3508 which supports those with disabilities. It passed out of the Senate Human Services Committee which credited the 2,500 witness slips submitted in support of the bill for its decision to allow the bill out of committee. Activism works.

Leagues statewide, including our own, have worked overtime the last couple of months planning for and responding to requests for voter registration, preparing and presenting candidate forums for the March 20th primary elections, supporting our students as they marched in support of sensible gun laws, and meeting with legislators to discuss legislation the League supports. Special thanks goes out to Faye Marcus for meeting with representatives to lobby for the Equal Rights Amendment and to Dyanna Walker for attending a legislative breakfast hosted by Rep. Sosnowski regarding his support for the new tax credits for private schools. On April 18th, Linda Miller, Teresa Wilmot, and Claire McIntyre will head to Springfield for the League's annual Lobby Day to discuss the need for redistricting and a progressive income tax, along with other topics of importance. The May Voter will carry a report of the results of Lobby Day.

As we indicated above, our work is not over by any stretch. During the legislative session, you receive Time for Action notices. At this time of year, it becomes even more critical that you make those calls and write those letters. The bills that will move forward have all but been decided, although there is usually a spring surprise of one type or another.

Most critical to follow up on are calls meant to encourage our legislators to support the redistricting and progressive income tax amendments. While redistricting has been attempted in the past as a citizens' initiative, it has failed. This attempt will take the other route available- legislative approval. As it affects revenue, the progressive income tax amendment can only be put on the ballot with legislative approval. Citizen initiative is not an option.

If you need help formulating an argument in support of these bills, we would be happy to supply you with the necessary information. But please. Make the calls.

Chris and Claire

Committee Updates

Communications Report

Teresa Hill, Chair

No update at this time

Education Report

Glenda Shaver, Chair

On August 31, 2017, Illinois went from having the most inequitably school funding method in the country to potentially one of the fairest. What changed? After years of work, legislators supported a new way of thinking about how schools are funded and passed the 'Evidence-Based Funding for Student Success Act'. This new way of thinking about how schools are funded leaves the old Foundation Level behind and moves to a data driven Evidence Based Funding Model (EBM).

What is the EBM? EBM uses 27 markers shown by research to make a difference in children's learning and uses these markers to establish a funding level according to the children a district educates. Another way to think about it is, EBM looks at the child and determines what that child needs to support her learning.

While the Foundation Level funding method tried to account for community wealth differences and the local dollars available to each district, it was based on the goal of ensuring 75% of the non-at risk students succeeded. That left 25% of the non-at risk students and the at risk students (such as English language learners) as collateral damage of an inadequate funding system. Because the state never met the recommended Foundation Level funding amount, local resources continued to be the mainstay of school funding. 63% of the school funding in Illinois came from property taxes. The national average is 43%.

With the new way of research based funding, where children are the determining factor in what a district receives, local effort (property taxes) still plays a part but the state will be required to play a greater role in funding schools, eventually reducing the dependency on local resources. That's the good news.

What's the bad? Illinois has been so neglectful of funding schools that to fully fund the EBM will require an additional \$7.2 billion in school funding. This will take at least 10 years and the \$7.2 billion in 2018 dollars is likely to increase over time due to inflation.

So what will we do in the meantime? Again there's good news. The EBM will go into effect and those schools whose funding is least adequate will get the biggest bite of any new dollars that the state allocates to education. As recently reported, area schools will get a boost in funding allowing them to move forward in implementing these 27 research based markers as they best fit the children they educate.

The ugly? The need for local resources will not diminish quickly. As Superintendent Jarrett of RPS noted, we are still far from the 90% adequacy goal recommended by the EBM. Property tax will continue to be an essential part of school funding and will need to reflect rising costs that new state dollars will not yet address. It will take time for the state to get up to speed on truly funding schools so that all children have a shot at a good education. It will not change what school districts like Rondout spend, where high property tax valuation allows over \$30,000 per student, but it will begin sending

money to districts like Rockford where needs outstrip funding and allow them to continue to make inroads in providing the kind of education our children need and deserve.

On April 17, the League of Women Voters of Greater Rockford held a free public forum on 'The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly: The Impact of Property Taxes on Your Public Schools'. The speakers were Josh Aurand, Assistant Superintendent of the Harlem District, and Ben Boer, Deputy Director of Advance Illinois, a statewide education analysis and advocacy group. League member and former Rockton District Superintendent Jean Harezlak moderated. Thanks to all who helped to organize the evening.

Glenda Shaver and Claire McIntyre

Environment Report

Shawn Choinard, Chair

At the April 24, 2018 meeting of the Environmental Issues Committee, members discussed the recent PBS show Nova: Living with the Weather Machine and its excellent coverage of climate change, the April 13th Illinois E.P.A.

Notification to the Green Meadow Estates of Rockford LLC (formerly known as the Gem Suburban Mobile Home Park) Drinking Water Supply of Right to Know Requirements for trichloroethylene (TCE) at 2.5 parts per billion, plus the upcoming Upper Mississippi River Region Annual Meeting on June 27, 2018 in Chicago.

Member Barbara Flores gave a wonderful presentation on Wild Ones of Rock River Valley, a local branch of Wild Ones, a national organization that emphasizes the benefits of growing native wildflowers. Bees, birds and butterflies benefit from native plantings, whether one plants only a few native specimens or many. Ms. Flores spoke about the Wild Ones of Rock River Valley native plant sale, invasive species and how to make a wildlife friendly yard. She also handed out a tip sheet on ideas for a making your yard wildlife friendly and included sources for native plants and useful websites. For more information on Wild Ones of Rock River Valley, please go to wildonesrrvc.org.

In addition, Diane Cushing will provide details on the upcoming field trip to a local recycling center in the near future. The chair asked that over the next several week's members take time to review our committee's goals and begin the process of establishing goals for the upcoming year.

Although the scheduled speaker, Jamie Johannsen, Director of Marketing and Community Relations at the Forest Preserves of Winnebago County, was unable to attend today's meeting, we hope she will be able to reschedule her presentation in the near future. The Environmental Issues Committee next meeting will be on Tuesday, June 26, 2018 at 1:00 p.m. at Katie's Cup in Rockford. If you are interested in environmental issues, please join us.

Shawn Stacey-Choinard

Healthcare Report

Elaine Pfluger, Chair

No update at this time

Local Government Report

Paula Lind, Chair

Local Government Committee will not be meeting in April, May or June. The committee members will be preparing for the Fall Candidate Forums prior to the November 6th Election. Our next meeting will be July 11th at Noon at Katie's Cup.

Paula Lind, Chair

Immigration Report

Jo Minor / Teresa Hill, Co-Chairs

The Immigration Committee met on Thursday, April 5, 2018 at 5:30 at Meg's Daily Grind on Alpine. We discussed League participation in all the Ethnic and Heritage Festivals that will be taking place in Rockford and the surrounding areas.

Discussed focusing on media, especially print media (RRStar, Hispanic Newspapers in Belvidere, the Shopper) and asking that they profile positive stories on Immigrants and their contributions to our community. We could suggest "A get to know me column" highlighting a specific person each month.

Discussed making a Presentation to County Board urging a forum on Immigrants as an informational presentation to educate Boone County on the contributions and challenges of an immigrant in our community, similar to Immigration 101 that was done in Rockford. To counteract with education the hate flyers that were distributed in Boone County. Committee members will follow up with Fred Tsao of ICIRR and Kim Reed LWVIL. will discuss with the Board.

Our next meeting is Thursday May 3, 2018 at 5:30 at Meg's Daily Grind on Alpine.

Jo Minor

Sunshine Report

Alice Heath, Chair

No update at this time

Voter Services Report

Susan Janson, Chair

The VS committee has grown and we have been meeting regularly. There are 5 members who have asked to become deputy registrars. One of them, perhaps two, are from Boone County. Since we didn't have status there, we went through the process with the State Board of Elections. Progress in being representative of the Greater Rockford area.

Deputy registrars attended the March for Our Lives and took 7 registrations – one change of address and 6 first-time registrations. We were also at the Indivisible meeting when the subject was gun violence. We were very impressed with the young students who are very articulate in stating their opinions. We also attend the forum the students sponsored at East High School. We reaffirmed our opinion that these kids are awesome! While we didn't register anyone there, when they announced we were there, we were applauded. It's worth the effort to just show up.

Our next projects: registering for the November election, and updating the voter guide. New for us this year, we will be preparing candidate profiles. We are looking into a collaboration with United Way for this project.

Let me say how grateful I am to have all these wonderful ladies on this committee. They are full of new and exciting ideas to further our goals and to find new ones to tackle.

Campaign Finance Reform Report

The chair is vacant. If you are interested, please contact Claire.

Observer Corp.

We are looking to revive this committee. If you are interested, please contact Claire.

Membership Report

Diane Cushing, Chair

The Membership Committee meets the 2nd Tuesday of each month at Thai Hut (1441 Sandy Hollow Rd.) at 11:30 am. We are always looking for ways to help members get involved with the League, especially new members. Please join us for lunch if you would like to understand the League and how it works better.

Submitted by Diane Cushing - chair
Committee members - Teresa Hill, Carole Perrin

Upcoming Events

May 22 – Healthcare educational forum

June 2 – Annual meeting @ Forest Hills Country Club

Resources & Misc.:

[Monthly LWVIL Issues Reports](#)

Please follow the link above for a report on legislation and actions taken by LWVIL to support or oppose certain bills.



*“Thanks to all who attended
the Education forum.”*

Ben Boer, Deputy Director, Advance Illinois, Josh Aurand, assistant superintendent, Harlem School District and Jean Harezlak, LWV member and former superintendent of Rockton School district.

Action Committees

League of Woman Voters Greater Rockford

If your passions and interests align with an Action committee, please contact the chair for more info on how to get involved. You are welcome to attend a meeting.

- Environmental Issues Committee: Shawn Choinard (schoinard@comcast.net)
 - 4th Tuesday, 1:00 pm, Katie's Cup (502 7th St)
- Education Committee: Glenda Shaver (candgshaver@gmail.com)
 - 2nd Tuesday, 4:15, Megs on Alpine (1141 North Alpine Rd)
- Health Committee: Elaine Pfluger (elainepfluger818@comcast.net)
 - 3rd Tuesday of the month, 10 am, Meg's on Alpine
- Local Government: Paula Lind (plind@twp.rockford.il.us)
 - 2nd Wednesday, noon, Katie's Cup (502 7th St)
- Immigration: Jo Minor (jominor1@comcast.net), Teresa Hill (communications@lwwgr.net)
 - 1st Thursday, 5:15, Megs on Alpine (1141 North Alpine Rd)
- Voter Service: Susan Janson (voterservices@lwwgr.net)
 - 1st Thursday, 9:30, Stockholm Inn (2420 Charles St.)

“Stay in touch”

LWV Contact Email addresses are:
president@lwwgr.net - Both Presidents Claire McIntyre and Christina Hiltrop
membership@lwwgr.net - Chair Diane Cushing
billing@lwwgr.net - Treasurer Martha Pippitt
voterservices@lwwgr.net - Chair Susan Janson
newsletter@lwwgr.net - Editor Maria Palmieri
communications@lwwgr.net - Chair Teresa Hill
webmaster@lwwgr.net - Janie Wilson-Cook
secretary@lwwgr.net - Secretary Jo Minor