



Volume 67, Issue 7

March 2013

MARCH GENERAL MEETING

Observer Reports

Annually our League of Women Voters Observers give short reports on the Champaign County governmental bodies they observe. This is a condensed version of a year of regular meetings and is an excellent way to find out what is happening in the area. The first of these two meetings is Thursday, March 14 at noon at the Urbana City Council Chambers and will feature the following boards, commissions and districts:

- Champaign County Board
- Champaign County Regional Planning Commission
- Champaign City Council
- Champaign Historic Preservation Commission
- Champaign Planning Commission
- Champaign Park Board
- Urbana Historic Preservation Commission
- District 116 Board of Education
- Urbana Park District
- Urbana-Champaign Sanitary District

Please thank Mary Blair who has put together the Observer Corps for years as well as put together two excellent LWVCC program for March and April.

MARCH 2013 MEETING

Observer's Reports

Where: Urbana City Council Chambers

When: Thursday, March 14th, 2013

Brown Bag Lunch: 11:30

Program: Noon-1PM

April's meeting will also be Observer Reports

ALTERNATIVES TO MASS INCARCERATION

By Jessica Gao and Theresa Michelson

The issue of mass incarceration is coming to national attention in the United States. In fact, between 1970 and 2010 more people were incarcerated in the U.S. than were imprisoned in any other country. By 2006, the American prison population had increased more rapidly than had the resident population as a whole, and 1 in every 31 U.S. residents was under some form of correctional supervision.

Jessica Gao, the LWVCC student intern, organized a panel on this topic on Feb. 12th at the Women's Resource Center on the U of I campus to draw students' attention to the League's concern about the issue and to publicize the upcoming lecture by Prof. Michelle Alexander on her book The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness. The panel participants addressed the issue of the Champaign county jail expansion. There has been talk of plans by the County Board to renovate the downtown county jail in Urbana, a thirty-year old structure, or build a new jail facility.

The speakers also focused on ways of lowering the number of individuals sent to jail in Champaign County. Prof. Ginsburg is the director of the Educational Justice Program,

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Do you have friends or acquaintances who might be interested in the League? Share your newsletter! We will add them for three months to the mailing list for *the Voter*. Email Sue Phillips at sphillip3@netzero.com or phone her at 359-8818 with names.

LWVCC STUDY - CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM NEEDS

The criminal justice system needs committee is gaining momentum. We are reading through stacks of reports and evaluations while waiting for the consultant's report to be released this spring. There is still time to join the committee and we would welcome you. If you are interested in joining this committee please contact Michelle for the study materials and plan to attend our next meeting, Thursday, March 7th at 9AM at the Champaign Public Library.

Please consider joining this important study. For more information please contact Michelle Jett at michellejett1@gmail.com or 217-766-9677.

MASS INCARCERATION continued

a program that facilitates the earning of college credits by inmates in the Danville correctional facility among one of its many activities. Sister Carol Ammons talked about the Champaign county jail, particularly the monetary aspects, as well as the challenges facing former inmates after they are released. League member Joan Miller gave a thorough description of the Court-Watching project and how it is still going strong in the court system. It's now in its ninth year.

2013 STATE CONVENTION

Bloomington Friday June 7, 2013 to
Sunday June 9, 2013.

The League of Women Voters of Illinois biennial convention is going to be conveniently held at the Marriott in Bloomington, Illinois this year. Our League supports its members who want to attend by paying the registration fees and hotel costs. We would like to encourage as many of our members to attend as possible. The schedule normally has workshops Friday and Saturday and convention business Sunday morning, so maybe you would like to go for a day or even part day. We will keep you informed of workshops and programs. Signing up in advance is, of course, encouraged but keep the dates in mind even if you do not want to make a commitment right away.

Volunteer

The McLean County League of Women Voters has asked us for volunteers to assist them as they are hosting the State Convention. They are scheduling two hour volunteer slots and sign up will start soon through the McLean County League website. We will send an email to our members when the sign up spreadsheet is ready. The McLean County League is taking on quite a task, so it would be nice to be neighborly and provide support.

Membership Form – League of Women Voters of Champaign County

Name: _____ Date: _____

Address: _____ Zip: _____

Phone #: _____ Email: _____

Include this email address in the League Membership Directory? YES NO (please circle one)

Please circle the type of membership: Individual Dues* \$65.00 Student Dues* \$5.00
Household Dues* \$97.50 #NEW Member Due \$32.50 #New Household Dues \$48.75

Please make checks payable to LWVCC, and mail to: Sue Phillips, 1018 W William, Champaign, IL 61821

#Dues for new members, for one year, are half the amount paid by continuing members.

*Dues and donations are not tax deductible as charitable contributions from your federal income tax return. You may, however, make a tax deductible contribution to the Education Fund (of LWVCC) by writing a separate check made payable to "LWVIL Education Fund". Please include "Champaign County" on the memo line of your check.

Check your *Voter* mailing label for the month your membership dues are payable.

LWVIL Issues Briefing Conference

Four local League members, Trish Crowley, Debbie and Steve Rugg and Theresa Michelson, attended the annual LWVIL issues briefing conference in Chicago on Saturday, February 9th. The total attendance of members and guests was 175, with 32 different Leagues across the state being represented. All of us participated in the two morning plenary sessions--one on the proposal for a Graduated Income Tax for Illinois and the second on current challenges to women's health care. Three presenters handled different aspects of the GRIT, a proposal that is one of the Illinois League's priorities for the Spring 2013 legislative session. Brigid Leahy, Director of Legislative Affairs at Planned Parenthood of Illinois, was the speaker for the second.

At 11:30 all attendees grabbed their box lunches and chose to spend 45 minutes in one of two discussion and question sessions—one on the GRIT and the other on gun violence prevention. One more plenary session on the voting experience in Illinois for the 2012 election followed after lunch. The last hour of the afternoon we could choose to attend one of three workshops: The impact of climate change on the Midwest; What's new in Criminal Justice; or After the pension reform study: next steps.

One doesn't have to attend the Issues Briefing Conference to know that the League is focused and taking strong stands on so many matters that concern the social, ethical and fiscal condition of our state. What is wonderful about attending is to see how that focus and dedication plays out in the people who work, mostly as volunteers, for the League at the state level. It's also inspiring to meet those from other parts of Illinois who have the same passion for creating citizen participation through voter education and issue advocacy. Think about attending next year!

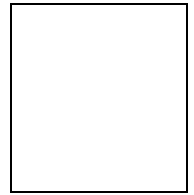
NEW League Study Beginning Graduated Rate Income Tax - GRIT

The state League Fiscal Action priority for the next couple of years is to get a constitutional amendment on the November 2014 ballot. The Fair Tax, the Graduated Rate Income Tax is what we are educating ourselves and our legislators about. This is critical so that we can more reasonably fund the state of Illinois constitutional obligations.

Beginning in April there will be a local LWVCC study committee which is looking for more members. Please contact Debbie Rugg at debrugg@aol.com or 621-7180 if you would like to join and/or have questions prior to joining.

More information about the project can be found at: <http://lwwil.org/GRITProject.asp> or in the two page article in this month's *Voter*.

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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

The Voter, March 2013, Volume 67, No 7, published monthly except July and August by
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CALENDAR OF EVENTS CRIMINAL SYSTEM STUDY NEEDS

WHEN: THURSDAY, MARCH 7TH

TIME: 9AM-10AM

WHERE: CHAMPAIGN PUBLIC LIBRARY

GENERAL MEETING

WHEN: THURSDAY, MARCH 14TH

TIME: NOON-1PM, PRESENTATION

11:30 BROWN BAG LUNCH

LOCATION: URBANA CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS

TOPIC: OBSERVER'S REPORTS

BOARD MEETING

WHEN: THURSDAY, MARCH 21ST

TIME: 12PM-1:30PM

LOCATION: CHAMPAIGN PUBLIC LIBRARY

LWVCC Volunteer Opportunities

OBSERVER CORPS BOARD WATCHER

Champaign Unit 4 School Board

Urbana Park District

Urbana Planning Commission

Celebrating Women's Suffrage

Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. (Delta), the Champaign-Urbana Alumnae Chapter, in conjunction with the Independent Media Center (IMC) invites **YOU** to participate in **The "Reenactment of the Women's Suffrage March!"** This is an event for individuals and groups of **ALL** ages and backgrounds.

The event will consist of a march around Lincoln Square Mall, an awareness exposition, and an empowerment session highlighting issues around domestic violence. March 9, 2013 and begin at 10:00 am at the Independent Media Center (IMC), located at 202 S. Broadway Ave., Urbana.

This year, Delta's national initiative is a call to action surrounding domestic violence. As such, the chapter's mission is to raise awareness on this issue; however, participants are encouraged to march in support of an issue of their individual and/or organization's choosing in support of women's rights. We would like for organizations to participate in the awareness exposition, march alongside Delta, and stay for the closing celebration.