October 2014

Presidents’ Message
Kathy Fullin, fullin@execpc.com, 238-9465
Ingrid Rothe, irothe@ssc.wisc.edu, 256-8124

In the Black! Thank you!
The LWVDC ended its operating year on June 30 in the black, for the first time in many years. A big thank you to members who increased their giving.

Assistant treasurer Helen Horn looked back over five years to review the numbers. If bequests are treated separately from the operating budget, the deficits over the past five years ranged from $9,500 to $16,500. The current Board has directed that bequests, as well as memorial donations, be treated as part of the endowment and put into the Memorial Fund to generate on-going income.

In contrast, the operating budget for this year, exclusive of bequests, ended with a positive balance of $2,800.

This change was due in large part to a significant increase in member giving. Member giving during the five previous years ranged from approximately $6,500 to approximately $12,500 annually. We are grateful to report that member giving during the last fiscal year totaled $21,800, an 84 percent increase over the largest member contribution total during the last five years.

A $3,000 grant from the Alliant Foundation toward printing costs of Candidates’ Answers also helped to meet our operating costs.

The Board would like to strengthen non-member fundraising. Professional advice indicates that 80 to 85 percent of giving to non-profit organizations is from individuals, rather than foundations or corporations. We believe that the printing costs of Candidates’ Answers, approximately $5,000 to $6,000 annually, is a service that many community members would be willing to support.

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Wednesday, October 8, 2014
Issues Forum 7:00 pm

Agriculture: Today’s Research - Tomorrow’s Tools

Heidi Zoerb (Assistant Dean, College of Agriculture & Life Sciences, University of Wisconsin – Madison)
Kathleen Glass (Associate Director, Food Research Institute, University of Wisconsin – Madison)
The Capitol Lakes Grand Hall, 333 West Main St., Madison
(Free parking in the ramp across the street)
The Board and other members have been individually identifying community members who they believe support League goals and signing letters to those individuals requesting contributions toward the printing costs of Candidates’ Answers. If you can think of a few individuals who might be willing to contribute to LWVDC and if you are willing to sign a letter requesting their help, please let Ingrid or Kathy know.

We would like to provide a strong foundation of community support to supplement the generosity of our members.

Attacking Racial Disparities

Katie Mulligan, October Bulletin Editor

A packed audience at Capitol Lakes heard startling findings from the team who produced the “Race to Equity” report for the Wisconsin Council on Children and Families.

Lawrence Torry Winn opened the issues forum by reminding the audience of the accolades Madison and Dane County had received in terms of its attractiveness to its current residents. He added, however, that he hoped the area might someday be praised in Ebony magazine as a place that is equally welcoming to African Americans.

Erica Nelson, project director, presented data that document racial disparities between African Americans and Caucasians in key areas that affect their well-being and opportunities for rewarding lives. Further work will focus on Hispanics and Asians in Dane County.

The team began their work with the hypothesis that Caucasians in Dane County would be “doing better” on various indices than those in the rest of the country and African Americans would do about the same as their national counterparts.

“We did not expect to find numbers showing that on most of our measures the 32,000 African Americans in Dane County were faring worse - sometimes far worse - than African Americans in the country as a whole,” she said.

One of the starkest examples of this finding is the disparity in poverty rates. In 2011, according to data from the Census American Community Survey, African Americans in Dane County were over six times more likely to be poor than Caucasians. In the country as a whole African Americans were about 2.5 times as likely as Caucasians to be in poverty.

Nelson presented data on educational and other economic disparities that show a similar pattern of the bleak situation of African Americans in Dane County compared to those in the rest of the country.

She pointed out that a “pipeline of accumulating risk factors” for African Americans leads to disparities in the child welfare, juvenile justice, and adult correctional systems. Nationally African American youths were twice as likely to be arrested as their Caucasian peers, but in Dane County in 2010 they were six times more likely to be arrested.

Nelson mentioned several factors that might contribute to these disparities. Dane County offers few opportunities for lower-skilled jobs and offers a large pool of job-seekers with advanced degrees and the ability to network for opportunities. Current practices discourage or exclude highly motivated applicants with “less developed resumes.”

Engaging the African American community is very important, said one audience member. Winn told of the work of African American community ambassadors who discuss the report’s findings in small groups.

Audience members commented on their difficulties in persuading African Americans and other low-income people to register to vote. Winn reminded audience members of the high turnout among African Americans during the last two presidential elections. They will vote when they perceive something is at stake for them, he said.

Nelson reminded the audience that they must have a sense of urgency about making change while simultaneously being prepared for a long-term commitment to solving the problems. A number of important initiatives have already begun, said Winn, as a result of the report and Rev. Gee’s essay.
Voter Services News
Gail Bliss, Karen Faster, Kathy Fullin & Priscilla Thain

Thanks to our Voter Service Volunteers and Partners!

Priscilla Thain coordinates volunteers at the Saturday DOT/Hill Farms Farmers Market. Thanks to Gail Kr, Consuelo Lopez-Springfield, Joan Lundin, Myrna McNatt, and Barbara Mortensen.

Gail Bliss coordinates volunteers at the Saturday Dane County (Capitol Square) Farmers Market: Thanks to Natalie Deibel, Shirley Haidinger, Maureen Kind, Paul Malischke, and Jo Anna Pautsch. Special thanks to Shirley for coordinating when Gail was out of town and to Ingrid Rothe for returning materials to the office.

Karen Faster coordinates the voter registration table at the St. Vincent de Paul food pantry on Fish Hatchery Road. Five days a week these volunteers answer questions about registration and voter requirements, such as proof of residence and need for photo identification. Special thanks to Marian Matthews, who staffed the table, reorganized the supplies and made a sign to attract attention, and to Kathy Fullin, who kept supplies stocked. Other volunteers were: Mary Anglin, Susan Byrns, Grace Fleming, Susan Fulk, Sue Hoffenberg, Ellen Karlson, Lois Kiggens, Sara Markham, Kathy Shurts, Greg Smith, and Sandy and Tom Vandervest. Last January, the LWVDC honored St. Vincent de Paul with its Outstanding Voters’ Service Award to acknowledge the agency’s exemplary service to their clients and the community.

Shirley Haidinger has been registering voters and providing information at the new Wednesday afternoon Brittingham Park Farmers Market. She also took the initiative to help potential voters at the Constellation Apartments on East Washington Ave., where she registered 13 new voters.

Volunteers provided information and/or registration at several one-time events:

• Northside Planning Council Independence Day celebration on July 5: Mary Bean, Lois Kiggens, and Greg Smith.
• NAACP picnic on August 9: Ingrid Rothe, Kathy Fullin, Carol Lobes, Bonnie Webber, Ann Niedemeier, and Paul Lindquist provided voting information.
• Triangle Ethnic Fest on August 17: Caryl Terrell, Shirley Haidinger, Kathy Fullin, Marian Matthews, Paul Lindquist, Janet Murphy, and Judith Munger.
• Northside Planning Council Community Supper on August 17: Gail Bliss.

On Primary election day, August 12, Myrna McNatt and Gail Bliss volunteered to answer phones at the LWVDC office.

Voter registration efforts will continue through October 15.

Know Your Board Member
Kathy Johnson, Program Chair

I joined the LWVDC in 1972, when my daughter was one-year-old. Having retired from full-time teaching, I missed adult conversation and wanted to learn about the community I called home, after a move from Minneapolis.

Since then, I have served on the LWVDC Board of Directors in various capacities, including three years as President, and am now Program Chair. I also served on the LWVWI Board, including four years as President.

I have been married to Doug Johnson, also a League member, for 47 years and have two adult children and three grandchildren, ages 7, 10, & 14. I am blessed that my family and Doug's live in the Madison area, so travel to family events is easy.

I volunteer at the Oakwood University Woods Retirement Community, usher at the Overture Center for the Arts, and honor my Norwegian roots by activity in two lags, one from the western part of Norway and one from the eastern part.

This summer, my life was sideswiped by a cancer diagnosis, but things are looking up because of an early catch of the disease. I am gaining strength and hope to continue my League work for many more years. I urge anyone who wants a rewarding experience to become involved in the League.

Encouraging informed and active participation in government.
Cap Times Editorial

The following editorial appeared in Cap Times on July 9, 2014:

Respecting the League of Women Voters

The nonpartisan League of Women Voters of Wisconsin is the state’s leading advocate for dialogue and debate at election time. The 17 local leagues across Wisconsin work, largely on a volunteer basis, to make sure that voters are informed about upcoming elections, about who the candidates are, and about where candidates stand on the issues.

But candidates have to help.

Unfortunately, some political careerists fail to respond to league questionnaires and debate invitations.

When the league publishes its educational materials, all candidates are listed. But in the space for answers to questions, there is simply the line: "Did not reply."

Voters should recognize that candidates who do not reply to questions from nonpartisan groups are disrespecting the electoral process. Voters should also recognize that candidates who do not reply to questions at election time are unlikely to be any more responsive to citizens if they are elected.

So it is that the term "did not reply" should generally be read as an indication that the politician in question has excluded himself or herself from consideration by voters who take their responsibilities seriously.

For the Record

The following Letter to the Editor from our LWVDC co-presidents was published by Wisconsin State Journal on September 20, 2014:

Work together to help people obtain IDs -- League of Women Voters of Dane County

The League of Women Voters of Dane County is dismayed that Wisconsin implemented the photo ID law just weeks before the Nov. 4 election.

Though we oppose the law because it creates unnecessary barriers to voting, we also want to ensure every eligible voter is able to vote.

Most people will have an acceptable photo ID such as a Wisconsin driver’s license, Wisconsin ID or passport. (See what is acceptable at http://gab.wi.gov/, our website www.lwvdanecounty.org or contact your municipal clerk.)

The Division of Motor Vehicles is providing state IDs free, even without birth certificates, but that could take weeks, especially for those not born in Wisconsin. The league will work with the Madison city clerk, NAACP and other organizations helping voters obtain IDs and register to vote. Citizens can help their neighbors, too.

The league stands for free, fair and accessible elections. Nearly 400,000 Wisconsin residents eligible to vote need to obtain photo ID before the election. Working together, we can make a difference.

-- Kathleen C. Fullin and Ingrid E Rothe, co-presidents, League of Women Voters of Dane County

New Members

The following members joined our League from May 26 through September 2. Welcome!

Claire Box
Grace Fleming
Alexandra Gregorski
Paul Lindquist
Carolyn Pflasterer
Patrick Turski
Patty Winspur
Catherine Briggs
Marthea Fox
Jill Jokela
Karen Peterson
Michael Rosenberg
Mary Van Hout
Donna Winter

Keep Us in the Loop

If your contact information changes (address, email, phone), let us know so we can update our records. We want to keep in contact with you! Please call (608-232-9447) or email (lwvdc@chorus.net) the office regarding your changes.
LWVWI Fall Issues Briefing

Dane County Executive will be featured at LWVWI’s Fall Issues Briefing.

Join League members throughout the state:

Saturday, October 4, 2014, 9 am – 2 pm
Crowne Plaza Hotel
4402 East Washington Avenue, Madison

Protecting Our Waters:
We Are All in the Same Canoe
Chairman Mike Wiggins, Bad River Tribe

The State of Education in Wisconsin
Tony Evers, State Superintendent of Public Instruction

All Politics Are Local:
Challenges for County Government in Wisconsin
Joe Parisi, Dane County Executive

Ask, Learn, Vote:
Motivating Women to Participate in the 2014 Elections
Sara Finger, Executive Director, Wis. Alliance for Women’s Health

Ensuring Free, Fair and Accessible Elections in Wisconsin
Elisabeth MacNamara, President, League of Women Voters of United States


Reservations are due by September 30th. If you wish to attend and missed the deadline, please contact the LWVWI office at 608-256-0827 to find out your options.

Election Observers Needed

The League of Women Voters of Wisconsin is recruiting volunteers statewide to be trained election observers in polling places on November 4. The observers will be the League’s eyes and ears to monitor what happens at the polls and watch for any signs of voters being disenfranchised. You don't need to be a League member to volunteer.

Poll watching with the LWVWI is an important and rewarding volunteer activity.

You can volunteer if you:
- Can spend a few hours or all day at a polling place.
- Are willing to participate in a 2 hour training session (a webinar) prior to the election.
- Mail in a report following the election.
- Preferably have a cell phone.

League of Women Voters of Wisconsin will provide:
1. Nonpartisan materials that let you know your role, what to look for, what to do if there are problems at the polls.
2. On-line training.
3. A number to call to report problems.

How to volunteer:
Sign up at: www.lwvwi.org/VotingElections.aspx. They will get back to you about where you are needed and times for online training.

Please tell your friends about this opportunity. Many volunteers are needed.

Receive LWVWI News Online

Brief, informative emails are sent by the League of Women Voters of Wisconsin (LWVWI). Topics include legislative highlights, updates on the League’s Voter ID legal actions, and key policy initiatives.

It is very easy to subscribe. Just go to the State League website at www.lwvwi.org and fill in your name and email at the bottom of their home page.

Thank You, Volunteers!

Our League would not be able to do all that it does without many hours from our volunteers. Along with the volunteers noted in other articles in this bulletin, we’d like to thank the following volunteers for their help in our office:

Mary Bean  Pat Levin
Joan Lundin  Kathy Shurts
Jan Van Vleck  Patty Winspur
Joanie Kanter for her work in the layout of this bulletin.
Contributions

Between June 15 and August 24, the following people contributed to our league. Thank you to all of our generous donors.

Mary Anglim  Mary Bean  Frances Bicknell  June Weisberger Blanchard  Cara Lee Mahany Braithwait  James Cain  Sally Carpenter  Carol Carstensen  Laura Chern  Irene Durbak  Joann Elder  Jean Freese  Mary Anne Fulton  Emy Gartzke  Lynn Gilchrist  Arneita Halle  Helen Horn  Shirley Inhorn  Elizabeth Jensen  Rita Kades  Andrea Kaminski  Jesse Kehres  Miriam Kerndt  Carol Kiemel  Pat Kippert  Judith Kleinmaier  Merilyn Kupferberg  Nancy Lersch  Patricia Levin  Sara Markham  Marie McCabe  Gloria Meyer  Marianne Meyer  Joan Niebauer  Sally Phelps  Karen Pope  Sylvia Armstrong Poppelbaum  Claire Rider  Ingrid Rothe  Joan Schuette  Rose Sime  Priscilla Thain  Sharon Trimborn  Dr. Deborah & Patrick Turski  Mary Van Hout  Sandra Vandervest  Georgene Vitense  Dorothy Wheeler

Candidates’ Answers:
Sandy Drew  Debora Kennedy  Evelyn Mazack  Anne Monks  Carol Toussaint

October Unit Locations

League members meet monthly in one of five units to discuss the topic of that month’s Issues Forum, using study materials provided by the program planners to guide the conversation. The discussion concludes with recommendations for further study or action. Find a meeting that is convenient for you and participate! Please let the host know that you plan to attend.

If any of the units have questions or issues, please contact the Unit Coordinator, Diane Liebert, at dwliebert@gmail.com or (608) 698-4143.

MONDAY, OCTOBER 20, 2014

Monday Evening West - 5:30 pm
Panera, 3416 University Ave.
Merilyn Kupferberg, 831-3267, joelmerkup@gmail.com
Barbara Mortensen, 233-7563, morten21@att.net

Middleton - 7:00 pm
Gardd Parc Condos
6767 Frank Lloyd Wright Drive
Park behind the building; walk through the courtyard to lobby; ring buzzer to #221, if the inside door is not open.
Diane de Vos, 836-0070, djdevos@chorus.net

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 21, 2014

Tuesday Afternoon - 12:45 pm
Oakwood West, Oaks A-4
Parking on grounds or in P1 Heritage Oaks Parking Ramp
Marie McCabe, 230-3536, mmccabe4805@gmail.com

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 15, 2014

Northeastside - 3:30 pm
Lakeview Public Library
2845 N. Sherman Ave.
Dorothy Wheeler, 244-4711, dorothywheeler@tds.net

Downtown Dinner Group - 5:30 pm
Capitol Lakes Retirement Center
Restaurant “The Seasons”
333 West Main St. - Free parking across street
Rita Kades, 251-2309, mkades@aol.com
Sally Phelps, 251-4834, phelpssa@charter.net

Upcoming Events Calendar

- Oct 8 – Issues Forum, 7:00 pm
  Agriculture: Today's Research-Tomorrow's Tools
- Oct 15 – LWVDC Board Meeting, 1:00 pm
- Nov 5 – Issues Forum, 7:00 pm
  Progress Report on 4-year Kindergarten
- Nov 19 – LWVDC Board Meeting, 1:00 pm
- Jan 17 - Lively Issues Luncheon/Forum, 11:30 am
  Status of Same Sex Marriage in Wisconsin

Encouraging informed and active participation in government.