Presidents’ Message

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

The League of Women Voters of Dane County is one of the partner organizations of CRANES (Capital Region Advocacy Network for Environmental Sustainability). An air quality proposal by CRANES was included in the 2014 Dane County budget after successful lobbying by the League and other members of CRANES.

In the fall, the League’s Executive Committee met with Caryl Terrell and Connie Threinen, long time League members and CRANES Board members, and Jon Becker, another CRANES Board member, to review the ambitious Dane 2100 Initiative developed by CRANES. We determined that League environmental positions support the sky, land, and water portions of this initiative.

The Dane 2100 Initiative by CRANES can be found on their website’s homepage, www.cranesinc.org, in the “Click to download PDF” section.

Co-President Kathy Fullin testified at the County Executive’s budget hearing in support of the CRANES Initiative. CRANES reports that County Executive Parisi proposed one of the “greenest” Dane County budgets ever, including funding for a Dane County Youth Conservation Corps, land protection targeted at improving water quality, and funding for additional staff for environmental programs.

At the County Board’s budget hearing, Kathy and other representatives of CRANES partner organizations supported Supervisor Dave Ripp’s budget amendment. This amendment provided funds for Phase 1 of the CRANES Healthy Skies proposal, an inventory of pollution emissions, conservation/efficiency opportunities and renewable energy resources. The League also wrote all Dane County Supervisors in support of this amendment.

The $24,000 for this inventory, along with $11,000 in temporary staffing to manage the contract for the inventory, will only provide a start on the necessary work. CRANES is hopeful that some land grant university will agree to perform the work at this limited price as a faculty-supervised student project.

This type of local League lobbying was more common in past decades, due to “observers” who attended county, municipal, and school board meetings and alerted us to upcoming issues that merited League involvement. If there are League members who would be interested in following the work of a specific governmental committee or a specific local government, that would enable us to become more involved in local issues.

Please contact Ingrid Rothe or Kathy Fullin if you would like to become an observer for any local committee or board.

Wednesday, February 5, 2014
Issues Forum 7:00 pm
(5:30 pm – 7:00 pm: Try out the new Voting Machines!)

Future of the Great Lakes
Caryl Terrell (LWVWI Legislative Committee Chair)
Shahla Werner (Executive Director, Sierra Club – WI John Muir Chapter)

The Capitol Lakes Grand Hall, 333 West Main St., Madison
(Free parking in the ramp across the street)
Encouraging Voter Turnout

Sara Markham

November Forum’s speaker Richard Matland revealed results of voter turnout “experiments” conducted in collaboration with LWVDC in Spring 2013 and suggested further approaches that LWVDC might consider to increase local voter turnout.

Introduced by Gail Bliss as a Visiting Fellow at the University of Notre Dame and Professor of Political Science at Loyola University Chicago, Matland contextualized his remarks by referring to recent trends in voter turnout nationally and internationally.

Overall, LWVDC scored a modest impact in its collaborative efforts with Matland to increase voter turnout in the Spring 2013 elections in Dane County. Utilizing four “experiments” and different “randomly selected” voter groups, Matland and Gail Bliss/LWVDC attempted to increase local voter turnout, with the following results [altered slightly by Matland in follow-up emails from Nov. 8-10, 2013]:

**Experiment 1:**

a) 3700 LWVDC-letters were sent to voters in Dane County, encouraging them to vote, to become informed before voting; this same group also received LWVDC’s Candidates’ Answers [CA]. Voters receiving the letter and CA recorded a 15.13% voter turnout.

b) A control group of 21,822 voters in Dane County received neither the letter nor CA, recording a 14.47% voter turnout.

Therefore, there was a .66% increase in voter turnout among the voters who received the LWVDC letter and CA, or “20-30 more people voted who would not have voted had they not received the letter and CA.”

**Experiment 2:**

4000 LWVDC-postcards were sent to another group of voters in Dane County, urging them to visit LWVDC’s Website to become informed; only ~1% actually did so. “The overall impact on voter turnout was approximately zero.”

**Experiment 3:**

Four different Facebook ad messages were created, encouraging voters to visit LWVDC’s Website to become informed. 300,000 Facebook viewings throughout the State of Wisconsin occurred. Only 37 recipients “clicked through” to the Website; representing “slightly better than 1 in 10,000”; yet this rate is “only 50% lower than the average Facebook advertiser.”

**Experiment 4:**

a) 2000 “liberal values” GOTV-postcards and 2000 “conservative values” GOTV-postcards were sent by LWVDC to voters in Dane County on the Friday or Saturday night before the Spring 2013 elections. The voter turnout in the “liberal values” group was 15.5%; the voter turnout in the “conservative-values” group was 15.35%.

b) Serving as the control group were the same 21,822 voters, receiving no targeted messaging from LWVDC. The voter turnout in the control group registered 14.5%.

Therefore, each values-messaged group of recipients recorded a .9% increase in voter turnout, or 16-20 more voters, with an increase of 32-40 voters in all.

Matland concluded that “voters are cognitive misers,” seemingly “reluctant” to read information; that is, providing more information to voters does not necessarily mean an increase in voter turnout.

Matland suggested possible future voter turnout approaches that LWVDC could pursue:

1) Social pressure, using ways to reveal which neighbors have voted and have not yet voted.

2) Compliments, thanking persons for voting previously and urging them to continue.

3) A picture depicting a set of “eyes” in communications to “implicitly” put pressure on recipients to vote.

4) One set of letters from a state official and one set from LWVDC to new voters, ensuring the secrecy of their ballot and urging them to vote.

5) Rethinking the format of CA to make it “more visually appealing.”

6) Increasing voter registration efforts.

7) Canvassing door-to-door.

In the lively Question-and-Answer session, many questions were raised about voter turnout: southern voting trends among African Americans; phone-GOTV efforts to help recipients actually plan and verbally commit to their trip to the polling place; voter turnout calculation procedures; reasons for the comparatively higher voter turnout in other countries; the recent voter turnout in the Wisconsin governor-recall election.

Other questions addressed effects of high school civics classes; of life circumstances; of various voter-suppression mechanisms; of car-signs urging voting and providing date and place to vote; of weekend voting versus weekday voting; of mail-in-only voting; of pre-Election-Day voter registration; of one political party tending not to respond to the CA questionnaire; and of nonpartisan Spring elections occurring every year in Dane County.

**Missed Any Forums?**

Have you missed any of our forums? If so, most of them are taped by City Channel. Go to our website, www.lwvdanecounty.org, and click on the link, ‘MadisonCityChannel Stream of LWVDC Programs’ to view them.
Global Climate Change
Ingrid Rothe, Co-President

The League of Women Voters of Wisconsin has a position calling for control of atmospheric carbon dioxide, as well as other measures, to prevent further global climate change. While we are accustomed to discussing global warming as an environmental issue, we hear less about it as an individual and public health issue. At the October 5, 2013 LWV-WI Issues Briefing, Joel Charles, fourth year medical student and recent recipient of a Masters of Public Health, spoke about the impact of global climate change on individual health, and how global climate change increases the nation’s health care costs.

Charles noted that we have already released enough carbon dioxide and methane into the atmosphere so that we are well outside the normal range observed over the past 250 years. By increasing levels of CO2 and methane to their current levels, Charles asserted that we have virtually guaranteed that global mean temperatures will rise by 1.6°C above the historical average. Scientists generally regard a rise of 2°C in global temperatures to represent a potentially critical tipping point at which time stored CO2 could be released in a positive feedback cycle over which humanity would have no control.

Climate change has serious implications for human health because human health depends on access to clean air; clean water, free of toxins and infectious diseases; adequate nutritious food; safe shelter and community; regular physical activity; stable civilization; as well as medical care. Climate change threatens all of these fundamentals, through increased air temperature, sea level rise, and extreme weather events (drought, flooding, tropical storms).

Increasing air temperature and declining air quality can increase the rates of asthma, lung and heart diseases. Because warmer air holds more smog, we would expect to see increasing hospitalizations and deaths from asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and heart disease. Because warmer air with more CO2 creates a longer pollen season with higher pollen concentrations, we would expect worsening asthma and other allergic diseases.

Heat waves can increase the incidence of heat stroke, as well as heart disease, stroke, and respiratory disease. In addition, suicide and violent crime also increase during heat waves.

Warmer air holds more water, so warming will cause more extreme rainfall events. These can overwhelm urban sewer/storm runoff systems and increase the chances of contaminated drinking water, leading to diarrhea and other diseases. Similarly, flooding in rural areas has been shown to increase contamination of drinking water with bacteria like e. coli. Warmer air and heavier rainfall also affect the expansion of infectious diseases, such as West Nile virus, already found here in Wisconsin.

Warming temperatures will also lead to rising sea levels, which threaten to displace hundreds of millions of people by the end of the century. Such mass migrations, in addition to increasing difficulties in obtaining access to nutritious food and clean water, can also increase the rate at which infectious diseases are spread, as more people live in crowded, less sanitary conditions.

Already, there is evidence that the use of fossil fuels contributes to four of the five leading causes of death in the United States, including heart disease, cancer, stroke and lung disease, while putting children at risk of asthma and delayed mental development. According to the National Academy of Sciences, the use of fossil fuels causes $120 billion in mostly health-related damages each year.

Like other costs that cannot be captured purely by the operation of the market place, these health costs are not reflected in the costs of the energy we use. Economists would argue that if fossil fuels were correctly priced to incorporate things such as health costs associated with their use, the higher prices would help provide incentives to people to find alternatives. Charles provided a number of options, such as replacing coal with cleaner energy and promoting a transportation revolution so that inefficient automobiles are not used for trips shorter than 2 miles. He also advocated for a plan known as Carbon Fee and Dividend. In this program, carbon-based fuels would be taxed at an increasing rate over the coming years, and the resulting revenue would be returned annually to all residents as an equal per-capita rebate. The tax would result in higher prices for carbon-based fuels, increasing incentives to economize on them. The rebate would reduce the overall decline in disposable income caused by higher-priced carbon-based fuels.

You may find it useful to consider health impacts as you decide which policies will best control the rate of global climate change. For more information on the proposed Carbon Fee and Dividend legislation, see www.citizensclimatelobby.org.

LWVDC Receives Grants
Alliant Energy has awarded our League $3,000 to support the printing of Candidates’ Answers. We applied for the grant with the advice and assistance of Carol Toussaint, former president of the state League. This grant will subsidize about 75% of the costs of printing the spring general election issue, which will be published in the March 20th Isthmus.

The Evjue Foundation has provided a $2,500 grant to support research on get-out-the-vote (GOTV) efforts. We plan to conduct a small project for the April general election with Dr. Richard Matland, a political science professor at Loyola University Chicago. Dr. Matland and the League began collaborating on GOTV research last year, and he reported on the outcomes of GOTV research at our November Issues Forum.
Contributions

Between September 10 and December 12, the following people contributed to our league. Thank you!

Janice M. Baldwin  Jeanne Bissell
Paul & Suzanne Buckner Claire Dick
Jane Eisner Joann F. Elder
Eugene Farley Joanne Harper & Guy Plunkett
Susan Hollingsworth Jesse Kehres
Mary Kunkel Ann W. Lacy
Diane Mayerfield Debby McNeil
Marilyn Mussallem Mary Jeanne Palmer
Marjorie Passman Melanie Ramey
Marilyn C. Schten Dr. Debora Turski
Peter & Phyllis Sprecher in memory of Sue A. Richardson

For the Record

The following Letter to the Editor from our LWVDC co-presidents was printed by The Cap Times on September 17, 2013

Get information on new health care exchanges

The League of Women Voters of Dane County applauds the common-sense explanation of the new health care exchange by State Journal health and medical reporter David Wahlberg in Sunday’s article "Sticker prices' only one factor in cost of insurance on exchanges."

As the article explains, the majority of people who enroll on the exchanges will get financial help with the costs. He also points out the higher premiums some people will pay will generally buy more comprehensive coverage.

The article suggests people looking for more information can go to healthcare.gov, excellent advice for anyone considering buying insurance through the exchange.

For people who want to learn more so they can discuss potential enrollment with adult children, relatives or friends who live in Wisconsin, state-specific information is on our website: www.lwvdane.org.

This information is provided by the Wisconsin Council on Children and Families, the Wisconsin Primary Health Care Association and the League. The League is committed to universal access to affordable health care for all U.S. residents.

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

LWVDC in the News

On November 5, The Cap Times printed an interview with our Voter Services Chair, Gail Bliss, and on November 7, The Badger Herald printed an interview with Kathy Fullin, our co-presetdent. Both interviews were about the study that the LWVDC has done with Richard Matland to determine ways to increase voter turnout.

Voter Services

Gail Bliss, Voter Services Chair

The Candidates’ Answers (CA) Questions Committee met November 8. Thanks to Priscilla Thain for her historic information and insights, Elaine Sinagra for the files of past questions and to Liz Dannenbaum for recording our decisions. The committee also includes Carol Carstensen, Laura Chern, Kathy Johnson and Ingrid Rothe.

On November 22, a small group of us met to discuss changes to the first pages of CA. Gail Bliss and Melissa Keyes took the resulting shorter version to a December 2 meeting with Ellen Meaney and David Miller of Isthmus. Gail Bliss, Karen Faster, Melissa Keyes, Aileen Nettleton, Gloria Meyer and Brook Soltvedt are working on the text. Isthmus will be providing some possible layouts for review.

Melissa Keyes and Pat Levin are working on graphics for the front of CA to encourage voting and civic engagement. We may try to run a graphic art contest for students this spring to use as the cover for the fall CA. Does anybody know a school art teacher who might be interested in working on this? This spring we will plan to use an existing graphic.

The Saturday Downtown Farmer’s Market was productive for voter registration. This fall, we registered about 80 people, in addition to answering questions about voter registration for those who lived outside of the areas we were certified to cover. Volunteers included: Mary Anglim, Gail Bliss, Sue Fulks, Vicki Hayati, Shirley Hardinger, Lois Kiggens, Clare McArdle, and Paul Malischke.

Gail Bliss, Kathy Fullin and Teresa Malischke (Spanish speaker and daughter of Paul Malischke), registered four voters and handed out Affordable Care Act (ACA) materials at the Mexican Festival on September 14 at Warner Park.

Cathryn Hatle and Gail Bliss volunteered Tuesday mornings with the Shine Program at the Central Library, assisting homeless folks with voter registration or ID.

The following volunteers registered voters and passed out material about the Affordable Care Act at the St. Vincent de Paul Food Pantry in October, November, and December: Sue Hoffenberg, Susan Fulks, Catherine Berndt, and Mary Anglim. Non-member volunteers for us at that site included Bonnie Webber, Grace Fleming and Barbara Kipp Feeney. Karen Faster coordinates our efforts at the Pantry and replenishes our high-demand health care materials.

Aileen Nettleton coordinated our project to register voters during the ACA Open Houses in October, November, and December at the Job Center on Aberg Avenue. Despite the best efforts of volunteers Joan Lundin, Jean Epenshade, Kathy Fullin, and Susan Fulks, we registered only a few voters and have discontinued this effort.

Sue Hoffenberg also registered voters for the League at Resource Fairs at the Boys and Girls Club.

If you would like to help out at the St. Vincent de Paul Food Pantry with ACA outreach and voter registration, please contact Karen Faster at Karen@OhioAvenue.com.

Encouraging informed and active participation in government.
Membership Committee
Steve Ploeser, Membership Chair

A new membership committee has been formed with the goals of getting new members, retaining the members we have and making sure that members are engaged in the League to the extent they want to be. We are envisioning two or three short-term projects to draw in new members or energize existing ones.

We’d welcome a few members who are interested in brainstorming. For more information, or to join the membership committee, contact Mary Anglim at 608-240-0031 or mtanglim@gmail.com.

Thank You, Volunteers!
Our League would not be able to do all that it does without the efforts of many 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:

Lois Bernbeck
Kathy Johnson
Gail Krc
Sally Phelps
Janet Van Vleck
Joanie Kanter for her work in the layout of this bulletin.

In Memoriam
Sadly, two of our long-term members passed away recently:
Gene Farley and Virginia Sample.

Gene Farley was an emeritus professor at the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and served as chair of the Department of Family Medicine from 1982 until 1992. Gene and his wife, Linda Farley, practiced medicine in underserved areas from the Navajo Reservation in Arizona to inner city neighborhoods in Denver and Rochester, N.Y. As part of his commitment to health care, Farley became an outspoken advocate for universal health care and a single-payer system. After his wife’s death in 2009, Farley created the Linda and Gene Farley Center for Peace, Justice and Sustainability on their 43-acre property in the town of Springdale near Verona.

Joann Elder shares her memories of Virginia:

Virginia Sample ("Ginny") moved to Madison in the early '60's, with her husband, architect Nat Sample. Mother of five children, and trained as an interior decorator, - with all these responsibilities her civic interests made time for her to join the League of Women Voters and play an active role in community affairs. Her quiet cheerful style of communication brought out the best in others of any work group. She was well informed and current in her awareness of social issues. She oversaw the renovation of downtown YWCA into a residential facility. If Ginny volunteered for a committee or task, you could be sure it was done well. She is missed.

February 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. Units meet regularly at different times and locations. Find a meeting that is convenient for you and participate! Please let the host know that you plan to attend.

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 17, 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
Garde 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, FEBRUARY 18, 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, FEBRUARY 19, 2014
Northeastside - 3:30 pm
Lakeview Public Library
2845 N. Sherman Ave.
Helen LeRoy, recording, 244-2377, haleroy@wisc.edu
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
Sally Phelps, 251-4834, phelpssa@charter.net
Priscilla Thain, 233-5578, priscillathain@gmail.com

Encouraging informed and active participation in government.
January Lively Issues Luncheon

The January Lively Issues Luncheon will be held at the Best Western Plus, Inn on the Park, 22 S. Carroll St, Madison on Saturday, January 25th. The event will include a social gathering at 11:30, lunch at noon and the program to follow at 12:45 pm.

The topic is “Restorative Justice and Voting Rights”. Our speaker is Colleen Jo Winston, Director of the Office of Victim Services in the Wisconsin Department of Corrections.

We are very grateful for the financial support of our luncheon by the Joyce Foundation and the League of Women Voters of Wisconsin Education Fund. Their grant of $300 has allowed us to lower the price for our members for the lunch and also to provide assistance to anyone needing partial payment of their meal. We want to recognize this support for our program on Voting Rights, and thank them for their assistance.

Reservations were due by January 20th. If you wish to attend and missed the deadline, please contact the LWVDC office to find out your options.

Upcoming Events Calendar

- January 15 – LWVDC Board Meeting, 1:00 pm
- January 25 – Lively Issues Luncheon
- February 5 – Issues Forum: Future of the Great Lakes
- February 12 – LWVDC Board Meeting, 1:00 pm
- March 5 – Issues Forum: Redistricting
- March 19 – LWVDC Board Meeting, 1:00 pm
- April 2 – Issues Forum
- May 7 – Annual Meeting

New Voting Machine Demo

The Madison City Clerk is offering League members and Capitol Lakes residents an opportunity to try out the new voting machines (ballot tabulators) prior to the February Issues Forum. Come to Capitol Lakes between 5:30 and 7 p.m. on Wednesday, Feb. 5, to try out the new voting procedures.