February 6, 2012, 7:00 p.m.

Promoting Judicial Independence

Speakers:

Bill Lueders, Director, Money and Politics Project
Wisconsin Center for Investigative Journalism

Joseph A. Ranney, Trial Lawyer, DeWitt Ross and Stevens S.C.

Author of Trusting Nothing to Providence: A History of Wisconsin’s Legal System

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

Related Events
February 19, 2013
Wisconsin State Supreme Court Primary

April 2, 2013
Wisconsin State Supreme Court Election

Lively Issues Forum Highlights Triumphs and Challenges

Maribeth Witzel-Behl was the recipient of the annual Voter Services Award for her exemplary leadership as City of Madison Clerk. Gail Bliss, chair of Voter Services, lauded Witzel-Behl for her work in helping Dane County residents respond to changes in the voting law, offering training to expand the number of Special Registration Deputies, and developing a Voter Education Ambassador program that brought volunteers to food pantries and other locations.

Bliss described a model relationship between LWVDC and the City Clerk. “We call on each other and support each other,” she said.

Jay Heck, Executive Director of Common Cause Wisconsin, offered a tribute to the work of the LWVWI, as well as that of the LWVDC. He mentioned the lawsuit challenging the Voter ID law, training offered poll watchers, and successful advocacy by the LWVWI to preserve same day voter registration.

(cont. page 2)
Lively Issues forum (cont.)

Heck continued with a list of daunting challenges. A change in the method for allocating electoral college votes is being advocated by Rep. Dan LeMahieu. His proposal stipulates that each congressional district would have one electoral vote with two additional at large votes for the state. Under that system, it is likely that Wisconsin would have given a majority of its electoral votes in the last Presidential election to the candidate who lost the popular vote.

Redistricting reform is a timely issue said Heck. He called the last redistricting effort “the most secretive in the nation” and urged attendees to build on the momentum for change to create a unified campaign.

New Voter ID legislation is likely, given the successful court challenges to the current law. Heck advocated working with allies to make it “as good as possible.” He also called attention to the problems of the Wisconsin State Supreme Court and noted the LWVDC’s upcoming forum on judicial independence.

Mike McCabe, Executive Director of Wisconsin Democracy Campaign, proclaimed that we face threats to our democracy on “multiple fronts.” He mentioned the “ever-expanding war on voter rights” and the challenges to the right to assemble peacefully. A gun is regarded as less of a threat in the capitol than a newspaper or cell phone, McCabe said.

The flood gates are open “even wider” to big money, as a result of the Supreme Court’s decision in Citizens’ United. McCabe pointed out that the problems resulting from the influx of corporate campaign donations are compounded by the lack of laws requiring disclosure of the source of those funds.

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The retirement of Sara Markham, long-time office administrator for LWVDC, was announced at the forum. LWVDC’s board is planning a tribute that honors her legendary contributions. Details will follow.

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Thanks to Volunteers for Candidates’ Answers (CA)

Laura Chern, CA-Volunteer Coordinator, thanks the following members for their work on the fall 2012 primary and general election issues of LWVDC’s voter guide, Candidates’ Answers:

**Proofreaders:** Mary Bean, Fran Bicknell, Sally Carpenter, Diane de Vos, Edith First, Karen Gunderson, Shirley Inhorn, Joyce Knutson, Merilyn Kupferberg, Joan Lundin, Marie McCabe, Kate Mulligan, Ann Nelson, Pam Rewey, Beth Ross, Suzanne Smith, Margaret Stine, Priscilla Thain

**Proofreader at Isthmus:** Brook Soltvedt

**Online Proofreaders:** Helen Horn, Brook Soltvedt

**Pulling inserts and delivery:** Sally Carpenter, Laura Chern, Irene Durbak, Karen Gunderson, Doug Johnson, Joan Lundin

**Bulk Mail:** Pam Rewey, Claire Rider, Deborah Sellers, Suzanne Smith

**Phones on Election Day:** Mary Fulton

*If you want to participate in the fun of getting out LWVDC’s Candidates’ Answers this spring, contact Laura at: lchern@tds.net or notify the office, 232-9447, lwvdc@chorus.net.*

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Help Wanted: Newsletter Editor

Half-time, full-time…or just send your thoughts for improvement. The Bulletin comes out eight times a year. The job could be split in two or continue with one editor. We could develop a different mix of online updates and print versions. If you are interested in helping in any fashion or have thought, “Gee, it could be better,” contact me and we can talk. Katie Mulligan. katielmulligan@yahoo.com or 250-1896.
Thanks to Volunteers

LWVDC voter registration volunteers worked at farmer’s markets, schools, bus stops, senior centers, and other sites. Voter Services Director Gail Bliss is pleased to report the formation of a new group in Lake Mills, which registered voters in Jefferson County. Thanks to: Peggy Glassford, Sue Handrich-Herr, Barb Ingram, Joan Rheineck, Alyson Schmeissner, and non-member Marion Ward.

Thanks also to Madison-area League members: Mary Bean, Gail Bliss, Sally Borden, Diane and Rick Broughman, Kathy Bultman, Maggie Dugan, Karen Faster, Kathy Fullin, Karen Gunderson, Shirley Haidinger, Joanie Kanter, Lois Kiggens, Maureen Kind, Pat Kippert, Heidi Knight, Diane Liebert, Joan Lundin, Paul Malischke, Clare McArdle, Myrna McNatt, Barbara Mortensen, Earnestine Moss, Katie Mulligan, Stephen and Mary Ploeser, Karen Pope, Sylvia and Larry Poppelbaun, Mike Quietto, Ed Reid, Joan Strasbaugh, and Caryl Terrell. And to non-members: Susan Becker, Elisabeth Kohl, Bonnie Van Overbeke, and James Watson.

Mary Bean, organizer of the Monona Farmer’s Market group, called special attention to three of her non-member volunteers: Carolyn Pflasterer, Barb Ricker, and Clay Vinje, who worked on voter registration in apartments in Monona.

Bliss expects to add more names when reporting is complete.


Fixing the Special Registration Deputy System (SRD)

League member Paul Malischke offers these ideas about how to improve the SRD system.

The problem: Many people spent considerable time becoming Special Registration Deputies (SRDs). Often they were frustrated because they could only register voters who lived in the municipality for which they were an appointed SRD. They had to turn away eligible voters.

The solution is legislation that would allow county clerks to appoint SRD’s who can register voters throughout the county.

Representative Terese Berceau of Madison is drafting such a bill. The bill would give county clerks the right to appoint county-wide SRDs or to delegate training responsibility to their municipal clerks. Municipal clerks would retain the right to appoint SRDs for their municipalities. The bill would also change the expiration date for appointments from December 31 of even number years to June 30 of odd number years. The new expiration date would leave seven months before the next election, plenty of time to get re-appointed. A draft of the bill and link to the petition are available at www.fairelectionswi.org.

Registering voters at high schools is one example of the need. One dedicated couple took considerable time to become SRD’s for eight different municipalities, so that they could register students at their local high school. This was a waste of time for them and the municipal clerks, who spent time with redundant trainings and paperwork.

Passing this bill will be an uphill battle, but the hill will be less steep if we unify support. Please contact me if you would you like to help. malischke@yahoo.com or 238-8976.
Unit Meetings

League members are invited to meet monthly in one of five units to discuss the topic of that month’s General Meeting, 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 or the unit leader(s) know that you plan to attend.

Monday, February 18, 2013
MIDDLETON, 7 p.m.
Community Room, Gardd Parc Condos
6767 Frank Lloyd Wright Dr.
Park behind the building; walk through courtyard to lobby;
Ring the buzzer to # 221, if the inside door is not open
Diane de Vos, 836-0070; djdevos@chorus.net

Tuesday, February 19, 2013
TUESDAY AFTERNOON
Shirley Inhorn, H-120 Oakwood, 230-3080
Marie McCabe, 230-3536;
mccabe4805@gmail.com
TUESDAY EVENING WEST, 5:30 p.m.
Noodles Restaurant, University Avenue
Barbara Mortensen, 233-7563;
morten21@att.net

Wednesday, February 20, 2013
NORTHEASTSIDE, 3:30 p.m.
Lakeview Public Library, 2845 N. Sherman Ave.
Helen LeRoy, recording, 244-2377;
aheroy@wisc.edu
Dorothy Wheeler, 244-4711;
dorothywheeler@tds.net
DOWNTOWN DINNER, 5:30 p.m.
Meet Sally Phelps in the Main Street entrance lobby.
Capitol Lakes Retirement Center
333 W. Main St. – Free parking across the street
Sally Phelps, 251-4834; phelpssa@charter.net
Priscilla Thain, 233-5578;
priscillathain@gmail.com

Calendar

February 6 – 7:00 p.m.
Promoting Judicial Independence Issues Forum
Capitol Lakes Grand Hall
333 West Main St.

March 6 – 7:00 p.m.
Food Deserts Issues Forum
Capitol Lakes Grand Hall
333 West Main St.

April 10 – 7:00 p.m.
Supporting Youth Programs Issues Forum
Capitol Lakes Grand Hall
333 West Main St.

Donor List
We appreciate receiving contributions to LWVDC from the following persons since November 23, 2012 (as of January 7, 2013):

Members:
- Hathway Hasler
- Betsy Jensen
- Pat Watkins

Non-Members:
- Anonymous
- Paul and Suzanne Buckner, “Thank you!” (CA)
- Jerome Hutzler, “Voter ID Project”
- Rita Rausch