President’s Message

Earnestine Moss

January has been a month to remember, not only because it brought in the new year, but because it proved to be one of the deadliest in political history for civil discourse. Our heartfelt sympathy goes out to the families who lost loved ones in the fatal shooting in Arizona, and to Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords and her family. I hope that this type of senseless act will not generate more limited access to our elected officials or fear that could keep the citizenry from going to the polls to vote.

Thank you to Terese Berceau for a very informative and inspiring message at our Lively Issues Luncheon, and the insights that she shared about upcoming legislation. She talked about the proposed tort reform bill that will limit awards for punitive damages and pain and suffering caused by defective products or negligence. She also discussed the situation with redistricting and answered many questions from the audience. Special thanks to Kathy Johnson and Donna Norton for their hard work in coordinating the program.

Our February Issues Forum, on February 2, is entitled Community Outreach: Finding Common Ground in Troubled Times. We look forward to a very interesting program with a panel of community organizers.

February 15 is the spring primary election. There are many candidates on the ballot for the various offices. We want to encourage every eligible voter to go to the polls and vote. It is critical to ensuring that we elect the best candidates to continue into the April general election. Armed with our Candidates’ Answers Voter’s Guide, let’s help to make democracy work.

Thank you to Sara, the Board members, and all volunteers who helped to deliver our programs and services. Keep up the good work!

February Issues Forum
February 2, 2011, 7:00 PM
Community Outreach:
Finding Common Ground in Troubled Times

Kaleem Caire, President and CEO, The Urban League of Greater Madison
Amy Mondloch, Grassroots Leadership College
Alda Preston, Political Action Chair, Madison Alumnae Chapter, Delta Sigma Theta Sorority
Floyd Rose, PhD, President, 100 Black Men of Madison, Inc.

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

Web site—Brook Soltvedt will investigate options and costs for allowing electronic payments from our Web site.

Fundraising—Gail Bliss has not found funding for a Spanish edition of Candidates’ Answers (CA). She will continue to research options and also what the need in the community is. The spring editions of CA in Isthmus will have a distinct appeal to the public to contribute funding for CA.

Voter Service—Priscilla Thain would like to train more moderators for the spring elections. Requests to moderate forums are already coming in.

Program—Issues forums for the rest of the year are in hand. Possible topics for 2011-2012 were discussed. The annual meeting program needs to be planned. There was consensus that a participatory program is preferred to a passive entertainment.

Old Business—We still don’t have a Board member to handle publicity. We also need another member of the Nominating Committee and they need to get started recruiting for Voter Service and Program Chair and the Nominating Committee.

Thanks for Your Support!

We thank the following friends for their recent generous contributions to LWVDC (as of 1/11/2011):

Helen Bruner
Paul & Suzanne Buckner
Paul Fisher
Harriet Gorski
Sara Krebsbach & Glenn Reinhart
Annrita Lardy

Mary Metz
Arlene Silveira
Miriam Simmons
Lee Sorensen
Sandra Wolens

Borders Gift Wrap Fundraiser

Again this year Joanne Elder organized volunteers to wrap gifts at Borders as a fundraiser and a way to increase our visibility in the community. Because Borders only made two shifts available to us, our “earnings” were only $80.00. Many thanks to Laura Chern, Cheryl Daniels, Joann Elder, Myrna McNatt, Rose Sime, and Miriam Simmons for volunteering and representing the League to shoppers.

Program Suggestions for 2011–2012

Is there a topic you’d like to see as the subject of an issues forum next year? The Board is assembling a list of possible topics to be discussed and ranked at the annual meeting in May. Send your suggestions to the League office via phone, mail, or email.

Voter Service

Priscilla Thain, 233-5578, priscillathain@gmail.com

Primary Election: Tuesday, February 15, 2011
General Election: Tuesday, April 5, 2011

The Primary edition of Candidates’ Answers will be on our Web site and in Isthmus on February 3.

Mary Bean will moderate a forum for County Executive candidates on February 4 from 7 to 9 PM at the Goodman Community Center, 149 Waubesa St., Bolz Room A. The forum is sponsored by the Sierra Club and CRANES (Capital Regional Advocacy Network for Environmental Sustainability), of which LWVDC is a member. Forum questions will be limited to environmental issues.

LWVDC is co-sponsoring The Future of Wisconsin Elections – Pros and Cons of Reform on February 21 from 6:30 to 8 PM at the Memorial Union at UW-Madison. The goals are to educate students and the general public about issues surrounding campaign finance and election reform in Wisconsin and to give the public an opportunity to engage in a dialogue about these important issues. Pro- and anti-reform voices will be represented on the panel.

A New Year’s Resolution

Deborah Speckmann, 444-2965; daspeckmann@charter.net

As a new year dawns, it is time to reflect on what one can do better for both oneself and one’s community during the upcoming year. In Dane County we are assured of two changes: A change in how county government will be run with the election of a new county executive, and how a new governor with a new cabinet will affect the state as a whole. These changes will call upon the oversight and vigilance of the LWVDC.

To be vigilant, the LWVDC needs to secure a dedicated volunteer membership by engaging more new members. Make this the year that you bring that favorite relative and that lunch partner to an issues forum. You have already established a commonality of interests, and I am sure that as they participate in an issues forum and listen to the remarks of our President about the things the League is involved with, they will wonder why you have not asked them to join before.

You are our best Membership Ambassadors. Make use of your contact lists and your networking skills. We will need many volunteer hands to ensure that the League’s message will be heard. Thank you.

“A nonpartisan citizen education and advocacy organization”
What’s Happening in Our Unit Discussions?
A composite of comments from recent unit reports.

September Forum on Behaving Sustainably
Most League members are already doing many of the things Kathy Kunz suggested.

Other ideas and suggestions:
- Get the news out through neighborhood newsletters, conversations, MG&E newsletters and Web site.
- Individual behavior changes can collectively make a big difference, but legislation/regulation is needed to control major polluters.

Ideas for legislative or regulatory solutions:
- Increase the gasoline tax.
- Require landlords to buy high-efficiency furnaces.
- Auto registration fees vary with fuel efficiency.
- More transmission systems; wind power from ND.

October Forum on Campaign Finance Reform
Disgust with current election ads that use lies, scare tactics, misinformation, and don’t cover local issues (standard message across country).
Media not doing their jobs.

Ideas and suggestions:
- Disclosure of corporate contributions
- Public financing with spending limits
- Shorter campaigns
- Four-year terms for House of Representatives
- Fewer elected officials at state and county levels
- Restore FCC public service requirements to the media to provide free airtime for candidates

What LWV should do:
- LWV should continue to speak out on this issue
- Support civics education
- Look at Minnesota campaign finance reforms; we need disclosure of who is giving how much
- Partner with like-minded organizations to support reforms
- Do voter service, voter ed./fact checking, contribute to ed. fund, ask good questions of candidates
- Board can publicly commend media that offer free time to candidates or provide good election coverage.

What members can do:
- Write to legislators
- Read corporate financial statements to see what contributions they are making
- At shareholder meetings, demand disclosure

Board Directors Needed for Program and Publicity
Since Carol Dutton moved away and Lisa Bu resigned, your Board has been without a Program Director or a Publicity Director. Donna Norton has filled in on the program side and Gloria Meyer has done much to help with publicity, but we need members to fill these positions on the Board. If you have any interest or can suggest someone for one of these positions, please send the information to the League office. We need your help!

In Memoriam
Many of you remember Lee Brown, a former League member who was an active participant in the Great Decisions discussion program. Lee died on New Years’ Eve. John Nichols wrote a tribute to Lee and her life of activism, particularly in foreign affairs, in an article in The Nation, which you can find online at http://tinyurl.com/leebrowntribute.

Outstanding Voter Service Honorees
At the Lively Issues Luncheon Rebecca Parish and Bonnie Weber were honored for their help with the LWVDC registration effort at MATC in October. Neither recipient was able to attend.

Two juniors from LaFollette High School who were poll workers in the November election received Outstanding Voter Service Awards at the luncheon. Keaton Walkowski canvassed for several candidates. He is the sports editor on the school newspaper and also wrote columns giving an election preview of gubernatorial candidates and reviewed the results of the Senate race. He is in the school’s E-Club, which gives students the opportunity to volunteer in community activities. This year he was a Salvation Army bell-ringer and picked up trash along Stoughton Road. Keaton plans to study journalism or law in college. He wants to be a politician or to write about politics.

Ellen Lund is the copy editor of the school newspaper. She is in the Creative Writing Club, on the school cross-country team, and in the E-Club. She plays three musical instruments, the bass, saxophone, and flute, and is a member of three school bands. Outside of school she plays lacrosse, knits, and works at the Ben Franklin craft store. Ellen wants a career as an author and journalist.
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.

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 15, 2011

TUESDAY AFTERNOON, 12:45 pm
Host: Jean Freese, 230-3540, D76 The Oaks
Oakwood Village Retirement Community
6225 Mineral Point Rd.
Jean Freese, 230-3540; jfreese7@gmail.com
Elizabeth Lewis, 230-3101; bettyfay1916@gmail.com

TUESDAY EVENING WEST, 7:30 pm
Host: Edith Sullivan, 1802 Monroe St., 230-5881
Discussion Leader: Carol Kiemel, 286-1446
Gloria Meyer, 288-8160; gloria.meyer@juno.com

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 16, 2011

NORTHEASTSIDE, 3:30 pm
Discussion Leader: Pat Kippert, 837-5932
Lakeview Public Library, 2845 N. Sherman Ave.
Mary Bean, 222-5783; marybean@charter.net
Dorothy Wheeler, 244-4711; dorothywheeler@charter.net

DOWNTOWN DINNER, 5:30 pm
Capitol Lakes Restaurant “The Seasons”
333 W. Main St. – Free parking across the street
Sally Phelps, 251-4834; phelpssa@charter.net
Priscilla Thain, 233-5578; priscillathain@gmail.com

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 21, 2011

MIDDLETON, 7 PM
Pat Levin, 836-1176; smlevin@tds.net
Community Room, Gardd Parc Condos
6767 Frank Lloyd Wright Dr.
Park behind building; walk through courtyard to lobby;
Ring buzzer to # 221 if inside door is not open
Diane de Vos, 836-0070; djdevos@chorus.net

Community Outreach Committee

Earnestine Moss, 244-0422; emosse@aol.com

During the month of January, I sent weekly announcements to Let’s Go To Church, encouraging the public to join us for our Lively Issues Forum. All other efforts were geared toward arranging the February issues forum on community outreach.

Every organization must do community outreach to maintain and energize its membership. The LWVDC is always looking to be inclusive in its efforts, to ensure a more democratic society. We welcome all Dane County residents over the age of 18 to join LWVDC and to participate in our monthly issues forums and unit meetings. The LWVDC also looks for opportunities to collaborate with other groups and organizations to address some of the many problems that we face in the Madison area and throughout Dane County.

I hope that you will join us for our forum on February 2, entitled Community Outreach: Finding Common Ground in Troubled Times.

Calendar of Upcoming Events

- February 2 – Issues Forum Community Outreach
- February 4 – County Executive candidates forum
- February 10 – Deadline Bulletin & study materials
- February 14 – LWVDC Board Meeting
- February 15 – Spring Primary Election
- February 21 – Panel: The Future of Wisconsin Elections – Pros and Cons of Reform
- March 2 – Issues Forum Charter Schools
- March 10 – Deadline Bulletin & study materials
- March 14 – LWVDC Board Meeting
- April 5 – Nonpartisan Spring Election
- April 6 – Issues Forum Land Use
- April 10 – Deadline Bulletin & study materials
- April 11 – LWVDC Board Meeting
- May 4 – LWVDC Annual Meeting (tentative)
- May 9 – LWVDC Board Meeting

If you haven’t already renewed your membership, OR if you have a friend who would like to join, take advantage of the Special Half-Year Dues Rate for the remaining fiscal year, January 1 – June 30, 2011!