No Fall Election? What do we do?

The public knows us best for our voter registration activities, Candidates’ Answers, and moderating candidate forums.

But the League has a long history of involvement in specific policy issues. We see citizen involvement in governmental processes, broad participation in elections, and a fair electoral process as ways to achieve a democracy that makes people’s lives better.

Maybe your particular passion is clean water. Or high quality early childhood education. Or homelessness. Or equal rights. Or . . .

This summer and fall, we have the opportunity to focus on these issues. The state League will be sending out email alerts drawing our attention to legislative budget issues. Although our direct ability to impact decisions by the legislative majority is limited if we are represented by minority party legislators, we can still take action.

Think of one friend or family member who lives outside of Madison and cares about that issue. Share the information with that person and ask them to contact their legislator.

If there is a local school board, county, or city issue that interests you, find out what committee is working on that issue. Start attending those meetings as an observer. As an individual, you can speak at a public hearing or contact your elected representative when decisions are being made.

(Continued on page 2.)
If you would like to be an official League observer, contact us to get the guidelines (and a League button) for observers. Check out the county, state, and national League positions on that issue by looking at our websites. If you have questions about whether the positions are relevant, talk about it with a board member. If the League has clear positions, you might want to draft a letter that the League could send at a critical point.

You may have an idea for a speaker and a program that would be of interest to other members. If you would be willing to help make arrangements for one of our monthly issues forums, please contact our nominated Program Chair, Edith Sullivan, to discuss your idea.

By working together, we can be more credible and effective than we can as individuals. Let’s use these next few months to make an impact on the issues we care about.

**Keeping Up With Politics**

*Mary Bean and Karen Gunderson*

There are a number of ways to keep up with politics without attending meetings and hearings in person – though you should definitely attend in person if you have the time and inclination.

WisconsinEye provides live and archived coverage of committee meetings throughout the Capitol building so citizens can see their elected representatives in action. Visit their website at wiseye.org to learn more.

One can be notified electronically of the progress of specific bills through the legislature by filling out the form at Notify.legis.state.wi.us. You can also find information about specific bills at: docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/2015/proposals/ab1, where ‘ab1’ can be replaced by whichever Assembly or Senate bill for which you are seeking information.

For those with cable TV, you can watch the Madison Common Council and Dane County Board on channel 994 and the Wisconsin Legislature on Channel 995. Other local municipal channels are also available to those with cable connections.

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**Human Trafficking**

*Karen Gunderson, Bulletin Editor*

When we hear of human trafficking, we might think of persecution of vulnerable citizens in less-developed, foreign countries. For any of us who thought that prior to our March 4 forum, we have had to adjust our perceptions - human trafficking occurs right here in Wisconsin.

Morgan Young, Immigration and Poverty Attorney, End Domestic Abuse Wisconsin - The Wisconsin Coalition Against Domestic Violence and Jan Miyasaki, from Project RESPECT, shared information on Human Trafficking in Wisconsin. Morgan told us that 75% of her work involves sex trafficking and 25% involves labor trafficking. Human trafficking is modern-day slavery and occurs throughout the world. It is estimated that there are 27 million slaves in the world today - more than at any time in history.

Approximately 14,500 to 17,500 people are trafficked annually in the U.S. Most victims of human trafficking are afraid to come forward, and most trafficking is hidden, so it is hard to confirm these numbers. Unfortunately, many of the victims of sex trafficking are children - often local children.

In 2008, results of the first studies of human trafficking in Wisconsin were released. Victims of trafficking come from our most vulnerable populations- the poor, children, immigrants, runaways, etc. Human traffickers use a number of methods to coerce victims - violence or threat of violence, threat of police involvement, threat of deportation, promises of money or drugs, claiming to care about the victim, isolating the victim from family and friends and depriving them of the right to leave the situation. Milwaukee has unfortunately earned the label, “Pimp Capital of the U.S.”, because there is so much prostitution.

The Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (TVPA) was the first U.S. legislation that defined Human Trafficking and made Human Trafficking a crime in the U.S. TVPA also provides resources for the victims of human trafficking. For the purpose of prosecution in Wisconsin, state law defines two trafficking crimes: Human Trafficking and Trafficking of a Child.

Encouraging informed and active participation in government.
Jan Miyasaki shared some interesting quotes about human trafficking with us and included a handout with stories from local residents who have been victims of sex trafficking. Many of the people who are trafficked for sex experienced abuse at home and are running away from those abusive situations when they are exploited for sex. Project RESPECT offers alternatives to incarceration for people charged with prostitution. They also provide services for women who voluntarily seek assistance in leaving prostitution.

What can we, as individuals and members of the League, do about this issue? We can contact our legislators and let them know that this issue is important and that, as a society, we need to put resources into reducing the number of people in our community who are trafficked. There are organizations that are working to decrease the demand for illicit sex - Truckers Against Trafficking, Wisconsin Coalition Against Sexual Assault and SlaveFree Madison are three of them. We can support these and other organizations. We can recommend updates to League positions on Human Trafficking. Perhaps the most important action we can take is to become more informed and to help others become better informed.

Missed a Forum?
The new low-power radio station, WMUU, is creating podcasts of our events. The podcasts are available on our website.

LWVDC Annual Meeting
The LWVDC annual meeting will be held May 13th at the Concourse Hotel in Madison. Social hour will begin at 5:30 p.m., dinner at 6:00 p.m., and the speaker will begin around 6:45 p.m. Laura Dresser, Associate Director of Center on Wisconsin Strategy will discuss poverty, inequality and economic justice. Our business meeting will commence after the speaker.

Members will be receiving Annual Meeting information in the mail in April. We hope you can join us.

LWVWI Annual Meeting
The League of Women Voters of Wisconsin annual meeting will be held June 5-7 in Ashland. Delegates from LWVDC will be selected at our annual meeting on May 13th. More information can be found at: lwvwi.org/NewsEvents/2015AnnualMeeting.aspx.

Voter Service News
Gail Bliss, Voter Service Chair

As the newsletter goes to print, the spring election season is in full swing. On Feb. 4, Carolyn Pflasterer and Sue Hoffenberg represented the Dane County League at the mayoral forum hosted by WORT at the Fountain of Life Church. They worked with members of the congregation to answer voter questions and distribute voter education materials they had prepared for the event.

In Madison, the spring primary election turnout was 12.9%, countywide 13.0%. On Election Day, Channel 27 presented a story about the challenges facing homeless voters. It can be viewed at: www.wkow.com/story/28132738/2015/02/17/homesess-advocates-and-city-leader-insure-homeless-voice-gets-heard-in-local-elections.

Thanks to Brook Soltvedt for statistics regarding use of the on-line Candidates’ Answers during the primary election week. On February 16, 373 visitors looked at over 1000 web pages. On February 17, over 700 visitors looked at over 2000 pages. Twenty-six percent of Election Day visitors used a mobile device to look for election information.

The printed Candidates’ Answers was included in the March 19th Isthmus. Priscilla Thain reports we are receiving requests for moderators for candidate forums.

Karen Faster reports that Mary Anglim, Cathy Berndt, Susan Byrns, Grace Fleming, Susan Fulks, Marian Matthews, Aileen Nettleton and Martina Rippon volunteered to register voters at the St. Vincent de Paul food pantry during February and March.
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:

Office Volunteers:

Mary Bean
Rita Kades
Jesse Kehres
Consuleo Lopez
Barbara Mortensen
Claire Rider
Edith Sullivan

Bulletin Layout:

Joanie Kanter

Fall 2014 Candidates’ Answers:

Mary Anglim
Sally Carpenter
Eileen Hanneman
Betsy Jensen
Joanie Kanter
Joan Lundin
Aileen Nettleton
Elaine Sinagra
Priscilla Thain
Mary Bean
Laura Chern
Helen Horn
Doug Johnson
Pat Kippert
Sara Markham
Sandra Saul
Margaret Stine

Fundraising Report

Sue Larson, Fundraising Chair

Thanks to every member who responded to the Valentine’s Day fund-raiser! By the end of February, we had received $3,470! These contributions are so very much appreciated! The participation of our members is especially valuable for meeting the goal of keeping our office operating and making sure the important work of the League of Women Voters of Dane County continues to be vibrant and strong.

The month of April marks the spring election in Wisconsin. With your aid, the League again has made Candidates’ Answers available to county voters to assist them in making sound and informed choices. We play a unique role in our community in furthering the democratic process. With everyone’s support, we look forward to carrying the priorities and values of our League’s past 95 years forward for many more!

Contributions

Between January 30 and March 2, the following people contributed to our League. Thank you to all of our generous donors.

Julie Crego
Clare McArdle
Kirk Malnor
Morris Sadicario

Valentine's Day Fund:

Margaret Amlie
Beverly Blahnick
Carol Carstensen
Susan Fulks
Peggy Glassford
Reta Harring
Nancy Jensen
Andrea Kaminski
Merilyn Kupferberg
Helen LeRoy
Sara Markham
Marianne Meyer
Anne Perrote
Sylvia Poppelbaum
Pam Rewey
Matilda Ripley
Joan Schuette
Suzanne Smith
Priscilla Thain
Sharon Trimborn
Patricia Watson
Frances Bicknell
Catherine Briggs
Jane Eisner
Emy Gartzke
Shirley Haidinger
Shirley Inhorn
Rita Kades
Pat Kippert
Sue Ann Larson
Joan Lundin
Marie McCabe
Aileen Nettleton
Karen Peterson
Edwin Reid
Claire Rider
Marilyn Schten
Gail Shea
Edith Sullivan
Carol Toussaint
Barbara Voltz
Phyllis Young

New Members

The following members joined our League from January 2015 through March 2, 2015. Welcome!

Julie Crego
Kathryn Hill
Caitlin Madden
Patricia Sammataro
Dan Wilson
Sue Wilson

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.

Encouraging informed and active participation in government.
Know Your Board Member
Susan Fulks, Publicity Chair

I attended my first LWVDC meeting in Fall 2013, invited by a friend who knew I was interested in the implementation of the Affordable Care Act. I was impressed by the presentation and recognized that the League could be a valuable source of timely information about local and national issues. So I joined, volunteered in the office a few times, and also became a Special Registration Deputy, serving primarily at St. Vincent de Paul Food Pantry.

Last fall I agreed to begin working with publicity for the Issues Forums, using Lois Kiggens’ template for flyers (thanks!) and adding online calendar postings to the press release lists. I began attending Board meetings in January and am very grateful for the assistance, support and knowledge of the Board as I begin to “learn the ropes”.

My pre-retirement background is in education. I have degrees from Winona State University and UW-Madison. I taught elementary students in Minnesota, California, and Wisconsin. My last four years in the classroom (1983-1987) were as the Computer Teacher for grades 1-8 in the Wisconsin Heights School District. We had brand-new Apple II-E computers with green screens and 5.25 disk drives with MECC software like Oregon Trail. How times have changed… I then moved to Cooperative Educational Service Agency (CESA) #5 where I had the marvelous opportunity to work with professional development and instructional technology and library media initiatives with teachers in our 35 small school districts.

I’ve been retired for over three years and love it! I volunteer with Wisconsin Public Television membership drives and do taxes with the AARP/VITA tax-aide program. I audit classes at UW-Madison -- Introduction to the Middle East this semester -- and exercise through MSCR’s program. And I travel – Thailand, Cambodia, Malaysia, Singapore in 2013; Appalachia, North Carolina, and six Eastern European countries last summer; and Turkey this coming April.

In my recent travels I have talked with people who have struggled – and some continue to struggle – with repressive governments, special rights for select populations and inability to actively participate in democratic decision-making. I am so thankful for all of the efforts that LWV members put forth in support of the goal of promoting “informed and active participation of citizens in government at all levels”. Your work is important.

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.

If LWVDC has your current email address, you should already be receiving the LWVWI news. But if you aren’t receiving it, 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.

Bulletin Feedback

If you have suggestions for articles that you would like to see included in the bulletin, any other comments about the bulletin or if you’d like to write for the bulletin, please contact the Bulletin Editor, Karen Gunderson, at jokarjen@gmail.com or 608-249-1366.

Upcoming Events Calendar

- Apr 1 – Issues Forum, 7:00 pm
  Making WI Government Work in the 21st Century
- Apr 7 – Spring Election
- Apr 8 – LWVDC Board Meeting, 1:00 pm
- May 13 – LWVDC Annual Meeting, 5:30 pm
  Concourse Hotel
- May 20 – LWVDC Board Meeting, 1:00 pm
Unit Meetings – A History  
*Diane Martin Liebert, Unit Coordinator*

All processes evolve over time, including processes within the League. The selection of Forum topics and the functions of Unit Meetings have changed over time.

In the past, the process for determining Forum topics began in January with the 'Lively Issues' program. The purpose of that program was to invite public persons (local, statewide or national), such as newspaper reporters or editors, political representatives, people knowledgeable of current local and foreign affairs and ask their opinions of what issues were going to be at the forefront for the coming year.

The members, at their next Unit meetings, discussed the options and decided which of the issues mentioned they'd like to have programs on. That information then went to the Program committee and the Board and they consolidated the answers and recommended those that had the most interest to the State League. The State League, after collecting recommendations from all of the local Leagues, decided which ones to recommend to the National League and which State issues should be studied and discussed. The local Leagues could also choose some local issues to work on.

At the May/June conventions, the proposed issues were chosen by the delegates. In July the new LWVDC Board determined the topics for the September-April programs using the State or National (sometimes mandated) topics. At this point, the Program Committee created the programs (i.e. researched the issue, determined the discussion question, located speakers, etc. for each month's program.) The potential speakers were approved by the Board and the Program committee.

After the General Meeting, the Units would meet to discuss the issue of the month. If consensus or concurrence were necessary, then they would be reported back to the program committee, which would in turn report them to the Board and either the National or State program committee. Many of these responses became our League's positions on that particular issue. League positions determine if or when LWVDC "takes action" by making statements to the Dane County Board, Madison City Common Council and the newspapers.

April 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. The discussion concludes with recommendations for further study or action.

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 Martin Liebert*, at dwliebert@gmail.com or 608-698-4143.

**MONDAY, APRIL 20, 2015**

*Monday Evening West - 5:30 pm*

Panera, 3416 University Ave.
Marilyn 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, APRIL 21, 2015**

*Tuesday Afternoon - 12:45 pm*

Oakwood
*Parking on grounds or in P1 Heritage Oaks Parking Ramp*
Marie McCabe, 230-3536, mmccabe4805@gmail.com

**WEDNESDAY, APRIL 15, 2015**

*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
Sally Phelps, 251-4834, phelpssa@charter.net