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Co-Presidents – Kathy Fullin
Brook Soltvedt
Vice President – Ingrid Rothe
Secretary – Barbara Mortensen
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September Forum
Edith Sullivan, Program Chair

Mark your calendars now for the first 2015-16 Issues program: September 2 at the Capitol Lakes Grand Hall, 6 p.m. for the social hour, 7 p.m. for the speaker and business meeting.

Sharon Corrigan, chair of the Board of Supervisors of Dane County, will speak about the critical issues facing Dane County and its priorities, fitting well with the overarching theme of “equity” that we’re continuing from last year.

Presidents’ Message
Kathy Fullin, fullin@execpc.com, 238-9465
Brook Soltvedt, soltvedt@tds.net, 274-5184

For years after the 9/11 attacks, Brook’s husband, David L. Nelson, was pulled aside by airport security while his documents underwent further scrutiny. He was always subjected to thorough manual checks of his person and all his carryon items. Why? Because someone named David A. Nelson was on the “no-fly” list, although who this person was and why he was on the list was never revealed. This meant every David Nelson (and, there are a lot of them) was forced to prove he was not THE David Nelson on the no-fly list before being allowed to buy a ticket or board a plane. A class-action lawsuit filed by the ACLU and a more recent federal court ruling that air travel is a constitutionally protected “sacred” liberty have led to some improvements. But the flawed no-fly list still exists.

When “big data” is used to flag possible criminal activity, extreme care must be taken to ensure that innocent people aren’t mistakenly identified. As LWVWI Executive Director Andrea Kaminski noted in a May 22 column in The Capital Times, this is a serious flaw with the Interstate Crosscheck system that many states have been using to purge their voting lists. Crosscheck provides reports of all people in a state whose date of birth and first and last names match someone in another state. While some states and local officials evaluate each potential duplicate registration before taking action, others simply purge anyone on their Crosscheck list. Imagine how many David Nelsons might be purged from the voting rolls simply for having a common name!

The Electronic Registration Information Center (ERIC) is a more comprehensive system, developed with support from the Pew Charitable Trusts. A short video on the ERIC website (ericstates.org) clearly explains how ERIC uses more data fields to improve the accuracy of voter lists. It also identifies voters who have moved but not yet registered to vote in their new location, so they can be contacted to be registered.

Whether you love computers or wish you could throw yours out the window, technology and “big data” are here to stay. The League and other advocacy groups for clean elections must remain vigilant about the technology used to register voters and count votes.

To learn more, visit these websites:
The Presidential Commission on Election Administration - supportthevoter.gov;
The Voting Technology Project - vote.caltech.edu and web.mit.edu/vtp.

Oh, and don’t throw your computer out the window just yet!

Encouraging informed and active participation in government.
Making Wisconsin Government Work

Katie Mulligan

Speakers at the Issues Forum on April 1 took on a big topic for the last forum of the season. Edward Huck, former Executive Director of the Wisconsin Alliance of Cities, and Helene Nelson, former Secretary of the Wisconsin Department of Health and Human Services, offered different approaches to “Making Wisconsin Government Work in the 21st Century.”

Edward Huck argued in favor of a state constitutional convention, claiming that we “can’t change the outcome without changing the process.” He pointed to the partisanship of the current Legislature and its focus on politics instead of policy.

In an editorial in the Wisconsin State Journal on October 19, 2014, Huck offered an extensive list of changes the convention might consider, such as changing the method of redistricting, switching to a merit system for selecting the WI Supreme Court, adding charters for local governments, redrawing county lines, implementing spending limitations and switching to a unicameral legislature.

Helene Nelson questioned whether a constitutional convention is the way to promote reform. “Perhaps we just need a tune-up,” she said, and to work in more “modest ways.” Nelson argued against the idea that the state is wasting “billions of dollars.” In fact, Wisconsin ranks near the middle in taxes and fees paid by state residents.

Nelson also pointed out that residents are attached to their local governments. What might appear inefficient can be a way of increasing access and participation. Instead, she said, we should ask how we can make the state flourish and work on a case-by-case basis to accomplish change.

Nelson advised identifying issues that people care about. Currently, budget cuts to public schools and the UW System are motivating interest in the political process. Other potential targets for change are the method of redistricting and the influence of money in politics. “Ask what will have the biggest impact,” she said to the audience.

Member Dorothy Wheeler, who has a long history of involvement in local government, spoke about the importance of county government. “They do respond to people. People feel comfortable calling them.”

The forum ended on a positive note with Nelson and several audience members offering examples of reforms that had come about because of long and persistent efforts.

New Members

The following members joined our League from March 3 through June 4. Welcome!

| Mike Casey | Mary Hagenauer |
| Anna Kaminski | Janet Kane |
| Karen McKim | Erinn Monroe-Nye |

LWVDC Annual Meeting Highlights

Sara Markham

Leaguers gathered for dinner and the LWVDC’s Annual Meeting on May 13, 2015.

Presentation on Income Inequality:

Presiding Co-President Ingrid Rothe remarked that we began our program year with the Race to Equity forum and would fittingly conclude with an address on Income Inequality by Dr. Laura Dresser, Associate Director of Center on Wisconsin Strategy (COWS), noting that in the interim the Madison police-involved shooting of Tony Robinson had spurred LWVDC’s ongoing efforts to work with the NAACP and other groups to minimize inequitable conditions.

As a labor economist Dr. Dresser first discussed the impacts of the recent recession in Wisconsin, where, by the summer of 2009, over 5% of its job base was lost, with Janesville and Milwaukee being hit the hardest and African Americans experiencing 3x the unemployment rate of whites, while men were disproportionately affected because they were chiefly located in the worst-hit sectors of the labor market. Wisconsin has 15% fewer construction workers today than in December of 2007.

In broader terms Dr. Dresser reported that the United States leads the world in producing inequality through its policies on immigration, trade, and technology, as well as its wage policies that tend to promote stagnation and decline in the middle and lowest labor market sectors. Dr. Dresser pointed to national economic data depicting an ever-growing divide, especially recently, between the share of income going to the top 10% and union density. Yet she asserted that “institutional frameworks” of employment and unions are often determined in this country by public policies, pointing to the growing number of individual states legislating increases in the minimum wage.

Dr. Dresser insisted that inequality is not inevitable, is not beyond policy control, thereby calling upon citizen vigilance and thoughtful advocacy of policies to reduce inequality.

Recognizing Our Members:

Honoring members at our annual meetings remains a treasured, inspiring tradition.

Helen Casper, Joann Elder, Melanie Ramey, and Yvonne Vitense became our new 50-year members, representing over 200 years of dedication to the League of Women Voters, as noted by Mary Anglim.

The annual LWVDC award named after Carrie Chapman Catt, founder of LWV, was presented to Sally Phelps, who has served many years in leadership positions at the local, state, and national League levels.

Mary Conroy, Kathy Johnson and Sybil Better were honored for their contributions as outgoing Treasurer, Program Director and Vice-President, respectively.

(Continued on page 3.)
**League of Women Voters® of Dane County, July 2015 Bulletin**

**Matters to Report and Vote On:**
Board members and project coordinators reported on their considerable work during 2014-2015 in sustaining LWVDC.

**Mary Conroy** and **Helen Horn** delivered welcome news on the current financial status, with attendees approving the proposed budget for 2015-2016.

**Sybil Better** explained the proposed Bylaws revisions, which were then adopted.

**Maureen Kind** summarized our Adopt-A-Highway activity and requested volunteers for the upcoming clean-up, taking time to recognize **Mary Bean** for her past involvement.

**Diane Martin Liebert** reminded Unit leaders to complete the new monthly reporting sheets and mail them to her.

**Sue Ann Larson** stated that the 2014 Fall Appeal raised sufficient funds to cover Candidates’ Answers, while the Valentine’s Day LWV Birthday appeal helped cover LWVDC operating costs; members were asked to consider contributing to the May Member Challenge.

**Mary Anglim** reported a net gain of 22 members (10%) in calendar year 2014.

**Kathy Johnson** reviewed the year’s program topics, acknowledging the collaborative efforts of **Kathleen Fullin** and **Ingrid Rothe**.

**Edith Sullivan** requested members to choose from a proposed range of forum topics for 2015-2016.

**Susan Fulks** told how she publicized the forums and voter guide through posters, press releases, and online postings.

**Gail Bliss** announced that LWVDC registered over 800 voters, underscoring the urgency of voter registration, especially among the low-income and homeless populations.

**Karen Faster** discussed voter registration at the St. Vincent de Paul Food Pantry.

**Ingrid Rothe** detailed recent voting research with Professor Richard Matland.

**Cheryl Daniels** described LWVDC’s Spring TV-shows “Know Your Candidates,” encouraging members to become moderators.

**Brook Soltvedt** pointed to recent innovations in producing Candidates’ Answers, revising the LWVDC Website, and creating an LWVDC Facebook page as a potential means to increase membership.

**Steve Ploeser** related progress in the LWVDC office computer tracking systems to facilitate more efficient member data management and retrieval.

We elected Board members and a Nominating Committee for the coming fiscal year 2015-16.

- Co-Presidents: **Kathleen Fullin** and **Brook Soltvedt**;
- Vice-President: **Ingrid Rothe**;
- Secretary: **Barbara Mortensen**;
- Treasurer: **Diane Martin Liebert**;
- Directors: **Gail Bliss** (Voter Service); **Susan Fulks** (Publicity); **Karen Gunderson** (Bulletin); **Sue Ann Larson** (Fundraising); **Edith Sullivan** (Program);
- Nominating Committee: **Clare McArdle** (chair); **Cathy Berndt**; **Sybil Better**.

**LWVWI Annual Meeting**

**Ingrid Rothe, Vice-President**

This year’s LWVWI Annual Meeting was held at the Chequamegon Hotel in Ashland. Approximately 90 people were present, including LWVDC delegates **Mary Anglim**, **Joanne Elder**, **Mary and Steve Ploeser**, **Ingrid Rothe** and **Caryl Terrell**.

The theme, “Ensuring a Healthy Environment and a Strong Economy for All”, was ably addressed by the main speakers. We were welcomed on Friday night by Deb Lewis, Mayor of Ashland, who noted that major leadership positions for the city of Ashland are all held by women. The 2015 Zabelle Malkasian lecture (funded by a gift to the state league from Bill Malkasian in honor of his mother, Zabelle, a long-time league activist from Ozaukee County) was given by Jody Knauss from the Center for Media and Democracy. Jody presented a lot of data on the declining U.S. economic growth rate in the last 30 years, and the increasing levels of economic inequality, with ever larger proportions of both income and wealth being controlled by only 1 percent of the population. On Friday evening, we also heard a poem by **Andrea Kaminski** in honor of the service (and retirement) of **Melanie Ramey**, president of the state league for the past 10 years, followed by a toast to thank Melanie.

On Saturday, the morning keynote was given by Dawn White and Esteban Chiriboga, from the Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission. Dawn spoke of the connection of the Anishinaabe people to the Mother Earth and to her water, and of the great wisdom of past elders in assuring that the Anishinaabe people could continue to hunt, fish and gather on the ceded territories, which include more than 90 percent of the Lake Superior drainage basin. In thanks for the gifts from Mother Earth and the water (fish, game, and wild rice), the Anishinaabe feel they must protect the mother earth and the water so future generations will also receive these gifts. Esteban spoke of the long-term environmental effects of mining, focusing on the impacts associated with the movement of huge quantities of water caused by digging deep pits in the earth and moving the mining waste in a slurry composed of water and tailings. Natural flow of water into mining pits results in drawdown of the water table, which affects the flow of water in streams and rivers. Piping slurry into tailing pits results in too much water at those sites, flooding wetlands. Maintaining water purification systems required for mines also entails maintenance of the pumps and filters for at least 500 years although inadequate funds are set aside to assure this will happen.

During the business meeting we adopted the budget, which reflected recent experience in receiving declining grants from foundations. We also accepted the recommendations of the state program committee: 1) review and update of our urban policy position; 2) developing and expanding presentations on infrastructure and the economy; (Continued on page 4.)

Encouraging informed and active participation in government.
3) continuation of the campaign on protection of water resources; and 4) education and advocacy on redistricting. We elected the new officers and board. The new incoming officers are President: Debra Cronmiller (Appleton) and Secretary: Andrea Kaminski (Dane County). Three new directors, Pat Finder-Stone (Greater Green Bay), Melanie Ramey (Dane County), and Jacquelynn Collins (Manitowoc County), joined the board.

A number of awards were announced. Helen Schwartz (Green Bay) was given the Meg McLane Award for Advocacy, for her long time work with immigrant populations to help them become citizens and voters, secure educations, learn English and obtain employment. Six leagues, including Dane County, were given awards for Membership and Leadership Development.

A high point of the meeting is the “Parade of Leagues,” where each chapter has three minutes to describe their projects of the past year and their plans for the year to come. The commonest words this year were “poverty”, “water” and “voter ID.” The Parade is always inspiring and energizing, reminding us how much good work is going on all over Wisconsin.

On Sunday, about thirty of us traveled south of Ashland into the Penokee Hills, not far from the proposed GTAC mine, to hear Northland College Associate Professor of Geophysics Tom Fitz give an excellent talk on the geology of the Penokee Hills, including how iron ore was originally laid down at the bottom of the seas, and how it came to be so near the surface at the Penokee Hills.

In addition to listening to the invited experts, the Annual Meeting is a great opportunity to learn what other Leagues are doing. Think about becoming a delegate for the 2016 Annual Meeting.

Fundraising Report
Sue Larson, Fundraising Chair

What a great result we achieved with our May Member Challenge! This year four anonymous donors generously pledged a total of $3,250 and they were not disappointed. As donations came in and the tally grew, it became apparent that our members would succeed in matching that goal. As a result, the May Member Challenge succeeded in raising a grand total of $7,445 for the League of Women Voters of Dane County!

These contributions are especially important for the bottom line as we seek to meet all of our financial obligations as we near the end of the fiscal year. Thank you to everyone who contributed to this appeal and many thanks to members and non-members alike who throughout the past year have provided financial support to LWVDC!

Voter Service News
Gail Bliss, Voter Service Chair

Well, voter photo ID is now the law in Wisconsin. LWVWI and the ACLU fought the good fight. Now we have to do whatever we can to see that all eligible voters have the ID they need to vote. We are fortunate that we have until the February 2016 primary to work on voter education and advocacy.

LWVDC members have been busy with a number of education and advocacy efforts; thanks to everyone mentioned below.

Gail Bliss, Kathy Fullin, Marian Mathews, Ingrid Rothe and Brook Soltvedt met to discuss strategies for reaching those without ID. Marion Mathews is developing documents to train the front line volunteers in the differences between DOT and GAB rules. One example is that DOT only cares that you live in Wisconsin while GAB and the local clerk care exactly where you live so they can place you in the proper ward. This is a significant issue for homeless people who move around from night to night. DOT and GAB differ on what documentation is acceptable to prove residency and that is confusing to everyone.

We also met with Maribeth Witzel-Behl, City Clerk; Scott McDonell, County Clerk; and Isadore Knox, Jr, Director of the Dane County Office of Equal Opportunity, to discuss outreach to individuals who may not have the required photo ID to vote. We will continue this collaboration.

Much activity occurred for the Spring Election. Shirley Haidinger, Paul Malischke, and Marian Mathews worked with Patrick Stickney, a regional organizer of the Campus Election Engagement Project, to develop a one page brochure for UW students encouraging them to vote in the April election. Sue Hoffenberg and Carolyn Pflasterer represented the League at a mayoral forum at The Barrymore hosted by WORT on March 19. They handed out information about voting and voter registration and League brochures. Cheryl Daniels coordinated the “Know Your Candidates” interviews for the primary and general election for the City of Madison Mayor and certain Common Council Districts. We also helped moderate interviews for the Monona Grove School District races. Jim Cain, Owen Daniels, Diane Martin Liebert, Melanie Ramey and Michael Rosenberg served as moderators. Priscilla Thain, with assistance from Gail Bliss, moderated a mayoral forum focused on homeless issues at Bethel Lutheran church. Cindy Schott, Pamela Egan and Helen Horn took shifts to staff the LWVDC office phone on Election Day.

Penzeys Spices called LWVWI seeking stories about photo voter ID as part of their story about the 50th anniversary of the Voting Rights Act signed August 6, 1965. Andrea Kaminski suggested they contact Gail Bliss, leader of the LWVDC voter ID project. Look for the story in Penzeys’ upcoming catalog!
Membership Report
Mary Anglim, Membership Chair

The Dane County League had a busy year. As part of an award application for the Membership and Leadership Development Program, I tabulated the number of members who participated in various League activities.

Of our approximately 260 members, 26 (10%) served on the Board of Directors and/or a standing committee (Financial Advisory Committee, Nominating Committee, Candidates’ Answers).

Forty-five members (17.5%) assisted with voter registration, education and outreach. This percentage understates the intensity of the activity--most Special Registration Deputies worked ten or more shifts through the fall 2014 and spring 2015 election seasons. Over 800 individuals were registered by the LWVDC this year.

Forty-nine members (19%) led or attended one of five monthly Unit Meetings. The Unit Meetings are small groups designed to help members study the topic of the Issues Forum in more depth.

LWVDC conducts six monthly issues forums per year. These are open to the public and are advertised via print and radio and outreach to the speakers’ organizations. Attendance ranges from 50 to 70, depending on weather, topic, and competing events. In February, March, and April we made an effort to tabulate member attendance. On average, 29 members (11%) and 10 guests were documented to have attended each of these events. (Not everyone who attends is willing to sign in.)

Sixty-two members (24%) participated in one or more miscellaneous small-group activities, such as helping with Candidates’ Answers, volunteering in the office, and working on the Highway Clean-up.

My counts did not include many hours spent behind the scenes - for example: monitoring state and local government issues on which the League has a position; contacting candidates for our Candidates’ Answers; planning, writing and laying out our Bulletin; creating and maintaining our website and Facebook page; designing, building and maintaining a new membership database; collecting and collating information from the unit meetings; composing letters to the editor; contacting speakers for the forums; and convening regular and ad hoc committee meetings.

There will be more to do in the coming year! Your renewal packet contained a Member’s Interest Sheet on which you could indicate ways you’d like to be involved in the League. If you haven’t yet returned it, please do so soon, or contact the office for a new copy. Our successes rely on the work of everyone.

Spring 2015 Candidates’ Answers
Laura Chern

Thanks to our many volunteers who helped produce the Dane County League’s popular Candidates’ Answers. Candidates’ Answers is published as an insert in the Isthmus and is distributed by the Dane County Library Service. Thanks to Tom Dehlinger of Isthmus and to Tracy Herold and Mary Driscoll of the Dane County Library Service for their continued help and support. A huge thanks to Elaine Sinagra and Brook Soltveldt for doing all the heavy lifting.

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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 this spring:

Office Volunteers:
Mary Anglim
Gail Bliss
Joann Elder
Eileen Hannemann
Rita Kades
Joan Lundin
Barbara Mortensen
Kathy Shutrs

Mary Bean
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Joanie Kanter

Upcoming Events Calendar

- Jul 15 – LWVDC Board Meeting, 1:00 pm
- Aug 12 – LWVDC Board Meeting, 1:00 pm
- Sep 2 – Social & Issues Forum, 6:00 pm
  Dane County Critical Issues
- Sep 9 – LWVDC Board Meeting, 1:00 pm
- Oct 7 – Issues Forum, 7:00 pm
  Voter Photo ID—Reaching the Infrequent Voter

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Contributions
Between March 3 and June 4, the following people contributed to our League. Thank you to all of our generous donors.

Nancy Aldridge  Paul Buckner  Joann Elder  Pat Kippert  Barbara Mortensen  Ingrid Rothe  Edith Sullivan

Mary Anglim  Mary Dick  Karen Goebel  Joan Lundin  Frederic A. Ogg Trust  Patricia Sammataro

Valentine’s Day Fund:
Mary Anglim  Catherine Briggs  Sally Carpenter  Harriet Gorski  Barbara Lee  Ingrid Rothe  Constance Threinen

May Challenge:
Mary Anglim  Frances Bicknell  Beverly Davison  Jennifer Elkren  Jean Espenshade & Donald Jones

Karen Faster  Edith First  Karen Gunderson  Nancy Jensen  Jesse Kehres  Anita Krasno  Susan Lloyd  Myrna McNatt  Karen Pope  Ingrid Rothe  Margaret Stine  Deborah & Patrick Turski  Sandra Vandervest

Spring Highway Cleanup
Maureen Kind
On June 2, seven LWVDC members cleaned our portion of Highway 14 just west of Middleton. Gail Bliss, Sue Hoffenberg, Linda Holthaus, Maureen Kind, Joyce Knutson, Brook Soltvedt and Caryl Terrell spent an hour and a half picking up 8 bags of trash and 5 bags of recyclables. The best find of the morning was a twenty dollar bill, graciously donated to the League by the lucky finder. The carrot cupcakes and watermelon brought by Sue Hoffenberg were an even better reward for all. Thank you to all our faithful workers!

Discussion Unit Reports
Diane Martin Liebert, Unit Coordinator
Our February topic was "Expanding Rights and Equity". Twenty-three members attended the four discussion units that reported on this issue.

It was suggested that a program to discuss same-sex marriage in relation to Marital Property Reform be considered by the Program Committee.

Our March topic was on "Human Trafficking". Twenty-three members and one guest attended the three units that sent in reports.

The general consensus is that this is not a Dane County only issue, it is a world-wide issue. However, as a League we can join with other groups and educate both ourselves and our community about it. We also think that the two organizations that provided the information at the general meeting were overwhelmed with their participation with the victims and that as an organization we should encourage the development of some sort of umbrella group to oversee a statewide program that also includes capture and prosecution of the perpetrators.

Also, one unit attended a public forum organized by State Senator Fred Risser and State Representative Teresa Berceau to discuss the State Budget.

For our April discussion I received four reports with 27 members attending. The topic was "Making it Work" which referred to current politics in Wisconsin.

Two of the units agreed that the situation should not involve a Constitutional Convention and that there is a need for us, as a League, to have more information to really make any substantive decisions on these problems. However the need to have a fair redistricting process was discussed by two of the units and also the need for more citizen action. One unit also suggested redistricting should be considered for a statewide topic.

The Tuesday Afternoon Unit has elected Nancy Simonsen for next year’s unit leader.

NOTE: Unit Leaders will be receiving forms with a different focus for your coming unit reports. Please use these forms and discard any of the old forms. I changed the questions because I think they will help emphasize the discussion issues more directly.

Voter Education Ambassadors
Voter Education Ambassadors (VEA) are Special Registration Deputies on steroids. After additional training, VEAs help educate voters about voter ID requirements and the voting process, along with registering voters whenever possible.

A useful packet of voter outreach materials is given at the trainings. Voting booths can be borrowed for use at events to display the materials. Contact the City of Madison Clerk’s office for more information at 608-266-4601 or www.cityofmadison.com/election/deputyRegistration/.

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