Presidents' Message

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Earlier this year, our League participated in a national LWV consensus on Money in Politics, and the national League adopted a new and detailed position on the subject at its annual convention in June.

In Wisconsin, legislation and court decisions have altered Wisconsin's status as a leader in clean government. Here are only a few examples of changes to Wisconsin law and practice that are moving our state farther from League ideals.

The League supports public financing of elections, either voluntary or mandatory, in which candidates must abide by reasonable spending limits. Until full public financing of elections is enacted, limits on election spending are needed in order to meet the League’s goals for protecting democratic processes. In Wisconsin, new legislation increased, and in most cases doubled, the contribution limits from individuals, campaign committees, and political action committees.

The League believes that political corruption includes the following (among other things): An officeholder votes or works to support policies that reflect the preferences of individuals or organizations in order to attract contributions from them; and the results of the political process consistently favor the interests of significant campaign contributors.

Continues on the next page:

Wednesday, October 5, 2016
Issues Forum 7:00 pm

Money in Politics - October 2016

Todd Berry, President of the Wisconsin Taxpayers Alliance
Kevin Kennedy, retired Director of the Government Accountability Board

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

In Wisconsin, the Supreme Court shut down the John Doe 2 investigation into possible illegal coordination between the Governor’s campaign (to survive a recall) and outside groups supporting him. Three district attorneys have petitioned the U.S. Supreme Court to review that decision. Among their arguments is an apparent conflict of interest with at least two justices who refused to recuse themselves. The same groups that were defendants in the case had also contributed millions of dollars to elect these justices to the Supreme Court.

The League supports abolishing Super PACS and abolishing spending coordinated or directed by candidates (other than a candidate’s own campaign committee). In shutting down the John Doe 2 investigation, the Wisconsin Supreme Court declared that it was unconstitutional to outlaw coordination between candidate campaigns and outside groups. The ruling that the John Doe investigation was illegal provided the justification for shutting down the nonpartisan Government Accountability Board, whose staff had cooperated with the investigators.

The League supports enhanced enforcement of campaign finance laws that includes charges to ensure that regulatory agencies are properly funded, staffed and structured to avoid partisan deadlock in the decision-making process.

In Wisconsin, the nonpartisan Government Accountability Board has been dismantled and replaced with two explicitly partisan Commission, for Elections and Ethics (Wisconsin Act 117).

We have invited Todd Berry, President of the Wisconsin Taxpayers Alliance, to speak to us at our October Forum about how these changes in campaign finance law and ethics are likely to impact the hard-working taxpayer of Wisconsin. And, we are also honored to have Kevin Kennedy, the Director of the now-defunct Government Accountability Board until his retirement earlier this year, to provide his views on the state of clean government in Wisconsin.

We hope you will join us!

Don’t Lose Touch – Renew Your Membership!

Mary Anglim, Membership Chair

Thanks to everyone who has renewed her or his membership in the Dane County League for 2016-17. While it’s never too late to reinstate your membership, we are nearing the end of this year’s drive. The office will soon compile our membership list for reporting to the Wisconsin and the National League. Lapsed members will be removed from our mailing list as of the end of October—no more Bulletins or Forum study questions, although we will continue to send you email reminders of our public forums.

If you received the October Bulletin in the mail, yellow highlighting on your address label means that, according to our records, you have not yet renewed for the 2016-17 year. If you get your copy of the Bulletin electronically and have not renewed, you’ll get a special reminder via email. Please check your records and let the office know of any error. Otherwise, I hope you’ll take a moment in the next week or two to maintain your membership. You can renew on-line at www.lwvDaneCounty.org, or return the blue Member Interest Form that you received in late June. If you need a new paper copy, please call the office at 232-9447.

Members of the Dane County League are automatically members of the Wisconsin and the United States Leagues. A sizable portion of your dues goes to maintain your membership at these levels. To stay informed on state and national activities, sign up for email updates from the state League at www.lwvwi.org and the US League at www.lwv.org/get-involved. Your dues and other contributions are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law. You will receive an acknowledgement for your records via email, if we have your email address, or otherwise through the U.S. mail.

Your support alone makes the League strong.

Thanks for renewing!

“A nonpartisan citizen education and advocacy organization” ©
Opportunities for Early In-Person Absentee Voting

Ingrid Rothe, Vice President

As the result of a federal court ruling in the lawsuit brought by One Wisconsin Institute, municipalities in Wisconsin are currently able to expand the hours for early in-person absentee voting, and, for the first time, designate multiple sites where early in-person absentee voting can take place.

The League of Women Voters and the Dane County Voter ID Coalition are promoting “ID Ready Wisconsin” a six weeks’ promotion of voting, voter ID and registration readiness. Encouraging people to vote during the early in-person absentee voting period will give those voters who do not provide the necessary Voter ID or Proof of Residence when trying to vote early, a chance to return to the polls with the correct documents.

On October 8, the Dane County Voter ID Coalition will have its Third Check Out Voting event, this time to be coordinated with the early in-person absentee voting at the libraries. Many details are yet to be worked out, so make sure to check the LWV Dane County website for opportunities to promote early in-person absentee voting and assist voters.

In Madison, the Common Council has established the following sites to be staffed for early in-person absentee voting and registration:

City-County Building in the Clerk’s office
Starts September 26, and has six weeks of early in-person absentee voting. Saturdays: Early in-person absentee voting at the City-County Building includes all Saturdays in October and also November 5. This is the only City of Madison voting location on Saturday November 5.

Sundays: early in-person absentee voting at the City-County Building includes Sunday October 30 and also November 6. This is the only Madison voting location Sunday November 6.

Libraries
All nine City of Madison libraries start September 26 and have six weeks of absentee voting. Early in-person absentee voting is available until the last 30 minutes before the library closes. Saturdays: Early in-person absentee voting includes all Saturdays in October at all libraries.

Sundays: Early in-person absentee voting includes all Sundays in October for the libraries that are normally open on Sundays: Central, Pinney, and Sequoya.

Streets East (4602 Sycamore Ave.) will host Monday to Friday early in-person absentee voting for the northeast side of Madison, since there is no library nearby.

Campus sites
UW-Madison (at the Marquee Lounge in Union South) and Edgewood start October 31 and have one week of absentee voting, Monday through Friday. To assist voters who live outside Madison, check with local clerks’ offices to learn about early in-person absentee voting opportunities. This information is also available on the LWVDC website.

Contributions

Between August 1 and August 31, the following people contributed to our League. Thank you to all of our generous donors.

Laura A. Chern  Mary Anne Fulton
Karen P. Goebel  Harriet F. Gorski
Nancy J. Jensen  Lori Kay
Jesse W. Kehres  Judith Kleinmaier
Caroline R. Liedtke  Lois A. Sater
Marilyn M. Schten  Joan L. Schuette
Anonymous

In memory of Pam Rewey:
Margy K. Walker

Upcoming Events Calendar

- Oct 05 – Issues Forum, 7:00 pm
  Money in Politics - in 2016 – (Capitol Lakes)
- Oct 12 – LWVDC Board Meeting, 2:00 pm
- Nov 02 – Issues Forum, 7:00 pm
  Stabilizing World Climate. (Oakwood Village West)
- Nov 09 – LWVDC Board Meeting, 2:00 pm
- Dec 14 – LWVDC Board Meeting, 2:00 pm

Thank You, Volunteers!

Our League would not be able to do all that it does without many hours from our volunteers. We’d like to thank the following August office volunteers:

Fran Bicknell  Jesse Kehres  Pat Kippert
Alice Kissling  Myrna McNatt  Kathy Shurts
Jan Van Vleck
Funding Report
Sue Ann Larson, Fund Raising Chair

By September of even numbered years, the League of Women Voters of Dane County already has been very involved with election activities. But every fourth year, the activity level increases and by this point in the fall, members are fully focused on ensuring that as many voters in Dane County as possible are registered to vote and that the public has access to freely available information about the positions of the candidates running for office.

In addition to the increased activity level of league members in a presidential election year, the league budget also increases. The cost of publishing spring and fall issues of Candidates’ Answers in 2014 totaled $4,782, while the costs in 2016 are anticipated to total $5,456. Happily, eighteen new members joined the league this summer and forty-three members, when renewing their memberships, included extra contributions, and thirteen 50-year members, who no longer need to renew their memberships, made generous gifts to the league.

The Ogg Fund quarterly payment was $1,319, June contributions of May Member Challenge Grant donors equaled $1,550, non-member contributions came to $125.00 and gifts from those renewing their memberships came to $3,272.62, with the result that the LWVDC total income for June through August totaled $6266.62. Thank you to all contributors for your gifts! Please do not forget to consider including the Dane County league in your estate planning. The League relies on all contributions and charitable gifts to maintain these important services for the people of Dane County!

In Memoriam – Don Kanel
Don Kanel, member of the League since the 1980s, died on August 17, 2016.

He was born in Poland in 1923 and came to the United States in 1938 to live with an uncle. Most of his family was lost in the Holocaust during World War II. He once said “The University had a great influence on me, I came here as a Jewish Socialist from Eastern Europe and became a New Deal Progressive and a member of a much larger human community.”

He spent most of his academic career as a professor in the department of Agricultural Economics and the Land Tenure Center. Don said, “The exposure to the third world and working as an adviser with many third world students helped me to appreciate how vital appropriate development is, not only to the third world but for the future of all of us.”

League members will remember him as the husband of Elisabeth (Bettina) Diaz Herrera who was president of LWVDC in the early 1990s and who died in 2009.

Discussion Unit Meetings
League members meet monthly in one of four 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, October 17, 2016
Monday Evening West/Middleton - 5:30 pm
Panera, 3416 University Ave.
Barbara Mortensen, 233-7563, barbaramort@charter.net
Priscilla Thain, 233-5578, priscillathain@gmail.com

Tuesday, October 18, 2016
Tuesday Afternoon - 12:45 pm
Oakwood West, A-4 (Marie McCabe’s home)
6205 Mineral Point Rd.
Parking on grounds or in P1 Heritage Oaks Parking Ramp
Nancy Simonsen, 230-3014, njsimonsen@gmail.com

Wednesday, October 19, 2016
Northeast side - 3:30 pm
Lakeview Public Library
2845 N. Sherman Ave.
Dorothy Wheeler, 244-4711, dorothywheeler@tds.net

Wednesday, October 19, 2016
Downtown Dinner Group - 5:15 pm
Capitol Lakes Retirement Center
Restaurant “The Seasons”
333 West Main St. - Free parking across street
June Weisberger Blanchard, 238-7337, jmweisbe@gmail.com
Katie Mulligan, 338-4598, katielmulligan@yahoo.com