### Presidents’ Message
Kathy Fullin, kathyfullin@gmail.com, 238-9465  
Brook Soltvedt, soltvedtbrook@gmail.com, 274-5184

### Changes to WI Voter Registration
On January 9, one very good change and one very bad change were implemented in Wisconsin for voters who need to register to vote.

**Good change:** Online Voter Registration for voters with a valid WI Driver License or ID.

**Bad change:** Special Registration Deputies can no longer register voters. This means we must adjust how we help voters register to vote.

Voters who want to register online must have a valid WI Driver License or ID. Their name, DOB, address, and DL/ID # must match the information in the Dept. of Transportation (DOT) database. They can update their address online in the DOT database, but updates to name and DOB must be done in person at a DMV office.

Online registration, a new option on MyVote.wi.gov, will be available again after the April 4 election. For some voters, it will work quite well. However, many students and many citizens who have recently moved to WI will not have a valid WI DL/ID. Also, small discrepancies (slight spelling differences, reversed digits in a DOB, confusion between last name and middle name, and so on) that don’t prevent voters from voting at their polling place, will cause a mismatch between the DOT and the MyVote systems and prevent online registration.

So, voters who don’t have a valid WI DL or ID, or whose information doesn’t match up correctly, will not be able to use the online system.

Continues on the next page:
The “Click and Mail” option that has been available for several years on MyVote.wi.gov will still be available, also after the April election. The voter enters the information, and then prints out and signs the registration form. The voter must then take or mail the form to their municipal clerk, along with a copy of Proof of Residence.

As an alternative, a voter can visit their municipal clerk’s office in person to register to vote, if they bring Proof of Residence. This in-person option is available through the Friday before the election. In the City of Madison, voters can register in-person at any library or city office.

Volunteers will no longer be able to review Proof of Residence and sign the registration forms as Special Registration Deputies. From our experience over the last decades registering thousands of Dane County voters, we understand that many voters do not have easy access to the internet or are not computer literate. There will still be a need for explanations, for hard copy forms and for help in figuring out Proof of Residence.

We are discussing our options for how to most effectively help voters in this new world. We may investigate purchase of tablets or laptops, Wi-Fi hotspots, and/or portable scanner/printers for registration volunteers. We plan to explore whether clerks and libraries in other Dane County cities may be able to cooperate on voter registration following the City of Madison model.

Maribeth Witzel-Behl, Madison City Clerk, continues to train Voter Education Ambassadors to help voters with registration, absentee ballot requests, and voter photo ID. You can find a link to these trainings on the Voter Service page on our website. This page will be a work in progress as we find our way through this new landscape.

**Successes & Challenges in High School Education**

**Carol Carstenson**

Undaunted by the weather, about 45 Leaguers and guests gathered to hear the principals of three area high schools discuss “Successes & Challenges in High School Education.” The principals and schools were: Steve Plank, Middleton High School, Keith Nerby, Sun Prairie High School, and Sean Storch, Madison La Follette High School.

**Successes:**

Steve Plank of Middleton reported that over 80% of his students were involved in sports or extracurricular activities—and those students had significantly higher GPAs. His student body is increasing in diversity (race and ethnicity) and in poverty. Middleton High scores very well on the ACT test and is ranked highly in various lists of “best high schools.” Plank was very proud of the U.S. Government and Politics course that every 10th grader must take. The semester course was begun in 2012 and has the students taking on the roles of legislators debating and voting on various bills.

Keith Nerby of Sun Prairie noted that the district is one of the fastest growing districts in the state. Sun Prairie has invested in technology and every student has a Chromebook; this allows greater individualization of learning. His school has personalized learning houses which makes it easier to increase student engagement and have students take ownership of their own learning – both of which are key to student success. Like Middleton, Sun Prairie’s student body is increasing in diversity and in poverty.

Sean Storch of La Follette described the school’s improving record on graduation rates; the rate for African American students (80%) is significantly above both the district and the statewide rate. The school has a focus on building relationships among staff. Next year, La Follette (like all the Madison high schools) will be implementing the first Personalized Pathways option in Health Services. La Follette has block scheduling and the Pathways program will require them to make some adjustments. Storch described Pathways as giving students a common set of teachers; the teachers are scheduled for a common planning time, which enables them to connect subject areas and to consult on students.

**Challenges:**

All three principals had similar lists of challenges: an increasing shortage of qualified teachers (especially in STEM fields), exacerbated by reduced compensation as a result of Act 10 and disrespect for the profession by political leaders and others; an increase in student poverty, including homelessness; lack of mental health services for students (in school and in the community); and lack of adequate financial support (federal, state, and local) to meet student needs.
New Members

The following members joined our League since the first of February. This brings our total number of members to 336 – the largest number in the past thirty years. Welcome!

Caitlin Brecklin
Amy Clements
Nancy Dunham
Julia Gilden
Carol Hermann
Jane Kelly
Jamie Krohn
Joanne Lemburg
Julie Loehrl
Cristal Martinez
Kate Speer-Ely
India Viola
Linda Yeager

Anthony Cary
Robin Downs
Cheryl Gain
Sally Gleason
Joyce Johnston
Andrew Kleps
Barbara Lobermeier
Ace Lynn-Miller
Patricia Patterson
Lisa Tennant
Shelley Witte

Donations

The following members and non-members made donations to our League recently. Thank you!

General Donations
Kathryn L. Mulligan
Jane E. Peterson
Carol T. Toussaint
Kathryn L. Mulligan
Lennea Pak
Steven Rosenblum

Candidates’ Answers Donations
Paul G. Buckner
Sheila M. Leary

Valentines Donations
Mary M. Bean
Catherine F. Berndt
June Weisberger Blanchard
Liz Winter Dannenbaum
Nancy J. Jensen
Joan A. Lundin
Myrna McNatt
Karen Pope
Edwin D. Reid
Joan L. Schuette
Margaret E. Stine
Ruth Ann Berkholdt
Frances B. Bicknell
Harriette Burkharter
Erin L. Grunze
Andrea Kaminski
Clare McArule
Anne Slaughter Perrote
Sylvia Armstrong Poppelbaum
Marilyn M. Schten
Deborah Ann Speckmann
Priscilla G. Thain

Thank You to Those Who Help Make the League’s Office Work

Valentine Mailing – 2/07/2017
Joyce Knutson
Joan Lundin
Bulletin Mailing – 2/16/2017
Pat Levin
Alice Kissling
Mary Bean
LWV-US Review & Forum Badges
Eileen Hanneman

Farewells to Arneita Halle, Jim Cain and Jo Ann Bitzer

Arneita Halle, a 50 year life member of the Dane County League, passed away in December. She was a surgical nurse at University Hospital, and her obituary in the newspaper mentioned her membership in the League of Women Voters.

Jim Cain, longtime LWVDC member, died unexpectedly on January 30, 2017, in Chattanooga, TN, after a special trip to Florida to ride one of America’s last trains powered by a classic wood-fired locomotive steam engine. He was with his wife of 39 years, and League member, Miriam Simmons.

Jim’s LWVDC work included a stint on the board as finance chair and as a moderator for Know Your Candidates. We will miss Jim very much, but need to also thank him in our hearts for a generous bequest he left to LWVDC. Donations, in his memory to LWVDC, will be added to his bequest, to continue the important voter service work that Jim believed was so important to our democracy.

Jo Ann Bitzer, President of the Dane County League 1972-1974, passed away in February. Jo Ann served for 25 years as an elected Supervisor in the Town of Verona, and was very active in several Town of Verona Commissions. Her obituary mentioned her leadership in the League of Women Voters.

It’s Time for Redistricting Reform

(From the League of Women Voters of Wisconsin’s March Newsletter – FORWARD)

In a victory for voters, a federal court in January ordered the Wisconsin legislature to redraw voting districts in time for the 2018 elections. The gerrymandered districts were ruled unconstitutional in November.

Although the court did not specify how the legislature should redraw the maps, the League of Women Voters urges lawmakers to choose a method that will minimize undue partisanship. The League filed an amicus brief in the case offering possible ways to accomplish that.

Unfortunately, the response from the legislature leadership responsible for the unconstitutional districts was to vote in secret February 2 to pay two law firms an indeterminate amount of tax dollars to defend the maps through the appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court. This is in addition to $2.1 million that taxpayers had already shelled out for lawyers to draw the
Encouraging informed and active participation in government.

gerrymandered maps in secret back in 2011 and then defend them through two lawsuits.

The League sent out an action alert to our members recommending that they contact their legislators and urge them to save taxpayers millions of dollars by adopting nonpartisan redistricting reform—specifically the model used successfully in our neighbor state of Iowa.

As in Wisconsin, the Iowa state constitution gives the legislature the responsibility of drawing legislative and congressional voting districts, a process that takes place every ten years after the census. Iowa’s nonpartisan Legislative Services Agency (LSA) drafts the district maps for approval, or rejection, by the legislature. The LSA is advised by a nonpartisan commission and is required to hold at least three public hearings about the plan and report on the hearings to the legislature. The legislature must bring the redistricting bill to a vote in a timely manner after receiving the report and only corrective amendments are allowed. If the legislature rejects the initial plan, the agency must submit a second version within 35 days. Again, the legislature votes, with only corrective amendments allowed.

The League is supporting a proposal currently before the state legislature that would have the Wisconsin legislature direct its Legislative Reference Bureau (LRB) to draft the maps. The LRB is the nonpartisan service agency that drafts all legislation, so this would be a natural fit. In addition to the usual districting criteria mandated by state and federal law, the League would advocate for citizen participation and access at all levels and steps of the process.

Since its first run in 1980, the Iowa process has operated smoothly and with bipartisan support. Each decade the legislature has enacted the first or second iteration. No district map has been challenged in court, saving Iowa taxpayers millions of dollars in litigations fees.

Iowa’s plan has resulted in some of the most competitive districts in the nation. In Wisconsin, none of our eight congressional districts is considered competitive and Common Cause in Wisconsin reported in 2016 that just one in ten of our legislative districts could be considered competitive. That leads to uncontested elections and less choice for voters.

There is plenty of time for a similar process to take place in Wisconsin before the court-ordered deadline of November 1. The League believes lawmakers should apply the Iowa method now to redraw the current, unconstitutional districts in compliance with the court order. They should also adopt Senate Bill 13, which would establish nonpartisan redistricting in the future, in this legislative session. That will give voters confidence that they are not being manipulated by politicians seeking an unfair partisan advantage—and will save millions in taxpayer expense now and in the future.

**Upcoming Events Calendar**

- **Apr 05** Forum, Capitol Lakes, 7:00 pm
- **Apr 12** LWVDC Board Meeting, 2:00 pm
- **May 10** LWVDC Board Meeting, 2:00 pm
- **May 17** Annual Meeting, Capitol Lakes
- **Jun 09/10** LWV WI Annual Meeting, Green Bay
- **Jun 14** LWVDC Board Meeting, 2:00 pm

**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. 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 17, 2076**

Monday Evening West/Middleton - 5:00 pm
**Noodles & Company 3600 University Ave.**
Barbara Mortensen, 233-7563, morten21@att.net
Priscilla Thain, 233-5578, priscillathain@gmail.com

**TUESDAY, April 18, 2017**

Tuesday Afternoon - 12:45 pm
Apt. A4, The Oaks (Marie McCabe’s home)
Oakwood West, 6225 Mineral Point Rd.
*Parking on grounds or in P1 Heritage Oaks Parking Ramp*
Nancy Simonsen, B39, 230-3014, njsimonsen@gmail.com

**WEDNESDAY, April 19, 2017**

Northeastside - 3:30 pm
**Lakeview Public Library, 2845 N. Sherman Ave.**
Dorothy Wheeler, 244-4711, dorothywheeler@tds.net

**WEDNESDAY, April 19, 2017**

Downtown Dinner Group - 5:15 pm
**Capitol Lakes Retirement Center Restaurant**
333 West Main St. – Free parking across street
June Weisberger Blanchard, 238-7337, mweisbe@gmail.com
Katie Mulligan, 338-4598, katielmulligan@yahoo.com