Summer 2020

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LWVDC 100th Birthday

On May 22, 1920, the LWV of Dane County was founded. Mrs. Walter Ayers was elected the first president.

The History Subcommittee of the Centennial Planning Committee will be publishing our "Historical Highlights" to help celebrate our 100 years of achievements as a League. Watch for further information about postponed events.

Be sure to watch the LWV of Wisconsin video, The League of Women Voters of Wisconsin at 100: An Enduring Legacy of Grassroots Activism, if you have not already viewed this excellent story of the League work across the state.

Issues on Deck

*New Virtual Forum Series*

Revenge of the Marshes: Preserving the Wetlands That Protect Us

Part 1: Kenneth Potter, water resource engineering and management expert and professor emeritus of civil and environmental engineering at UW-Madison, discusses the flood risks in Wisconsin and potential strategies for mitigating these risks which include adopting practices that promote the infiltration and evaporation of precipitation. Available online now.

Part 2: A lively exchange of ideas and expertise centered on the role marshlands play in flood control. With Greg Armstrong, director of land management and environmental education at Holy Wisdom Monastery; Ralph Petersen, atmospheric scientist with UW-Madison Space Science and Engineering Center; and former NASA and NOAA scientist, Gail Shea, League member and wetlands advocate. Part 2 will be posted online toward the end of June.
LWV Dane County believes that Black Lives Matter. We support fighting against injustice and demanding change. We respect the right to self-determination within the black community.

We are grateful for the voices and activism of local groups and organizations making change happen, including but not limited to the Young, Gifted, and Black Coalition, Urban Triage, Freedom Inc., Impact Demand, Movement Fund, Nehemiah/Justified Anger, 100 Black Men of Madison, YWCA, NAACP and more.

We know that democracy is messy. We believe that the discomfort is necessary.

Support Local Black-Owned Businesses

Many local lists have been published recently to highlight Black-owned businesses that we can support. Here are a few of those lists:

- 300 Black-owned businesses to support
- Madison Black Chamber of Commerce directory
- 32 Black-owned eateries and caterers in the Madison area

Understand the Calls to Defund the Police and be ready to dispel myths when you hear others repeating them.

Read up on what the calls to ‘Defund the Police’ mean. Reference multiple sources. Here is a collection of both reporting and editorials. Search “Defund the Police Explained” to find many more perspectives.

Sign BLM’s petition calling for a national defunding of police.

The Cap Times: Activists want to defund the Madison police. What does that mean?

Deadline: Maya Wiley Explains What’s Behind The Growing Call To ‘Defund The Police’ (video)

John Oliver talks about the evolution of police and police funding in America along with historical context. (video)

The Atlantic: Defund the Police. America needs to rethink its priorities for the whole criminal-justice system.

Vox: Growing calls to “defund the police,” explained

1A: What We Talk About When We Talk About Police Reform (audio)
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ERIC REASON - MICHAEL LORENZO DEAN - BREONNA TAYLOR
GEORGE FLOYD

Original Image from NPR CodeSwitch; Added “Tony Robinson”
President’s Message
Aileen Nettleton, president@lwvdanecounty.org

“Behind the Scenes” During the Pandemic!

Life has changed with the Covid-19 pandemic, impacting all of us individually and how we continue to carry out the work of the League. Entering a phase of “virtual” communication has stretched us to plan for new ways to communicate with voters for the fall elections and with you, our members, for forums and other educational programming. The Board and committees have learned to use Zoom and Google Meets to continue to meet.

Revenge of the Marshes is our first virtual forum now online! The excellent Climate Crisis Program Subcommittee Zoom/YouTube production features Dr. Kenneth Potter (UW-Madison) addressing the issue of stormwater and flooding increases due to both more rain from climate change and greater urbanization in Dane County. In addition to the in-depth analysis by Dr. Potter, a Zoom Q/A with members of the committee and Dr. Potter adds an interactive dimension. If you have not already done so, be sure to check it out. The Program Committee will be exploring and experimenting with ways to reach you and the larger community in these “new” times this fall. Watch for more in our Dane County e-news and on our website.

Book Discussions are already taking place via Zoom meetings. Two groups have recently met to discuss Neither Wolf nor Dog: On Forgotten Roads with an Indian Elder by Kent Nerbern. Watch our e-news for future titles for book discussions around Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, as well as our program areas of Making Democracy Work and Climate Crisis.

The creative Voter Service Committee has several “virtual” projects in the planning and implementation stages. The Apartment Project will be recruiting volunteer “adopters” for more apartment buildings, who in turn will be trained virtually to work with interested apartment managers to forward information to residents on voter registration, voter ID, and absentee voting. Additional volunteers will also be recruited and trained virtually to answer calls to the Voter ID Coalition Helpline. To reach UW students, Kathy Fullin, Paul Malischke, and Paul Lindquist created an online decision tree to help new and returning students navigate procedures for getting ready to vote. Working with the UW Badgers Vote Coalition, the decision tree has been posted on the UW website and you can share the decision tree with students.

The Board and committees continue to work behind the scenes to carry on the work of the League. The Fundraising Committee has teamed with our technical whizz, Paul Lindquist, and Office Administrator, Cindy Lindquist, to review and purchase a comprehensive database system to more efficiently keep our larger membership and fundraising databases up-to-date. An ad hoc board planning committee has been “zooming” to begin to revise our bylaws and policies.

Our Office Administrator and Treasurer moved to “remote offices” in March with the Safer at Home order and continued to support our infrastructure adeptly in new circumstances.

Our thanks to you for your patience during these unusual times and special thanks to our Office Administrator, Cindy Lindquist, for your remote support and to Paul Lindquist for your technical support.

As I complete my two years as president with LWVDC, I wish to thank so many of you who have contributed time and energy to the League these past two years, to the Board for your commitment and expertise in “holding together” all the moving pieces, and to the members of the Executive Committee, Helen Horn, Brook Soltvedt, Mary Anglim, and Christine Clements, for your wise and timely advice, judgment, and “League knowledge.”
League on Call: Witness Signatures

Interview with Marian Matthews, Voter Service Co-chair

Our League office got a phone call from Maribeth Witzel-Behl, Madison City Clerk, prior to the April 7 Election, asking for help. The clerk’s office was getting phone calls from absentee voters asking for help getting a “witness signature” while they were staying “Safer at Home.” Could we help?

The Dane County Voter ID Coalition Helpline (of which LWVDC is an active part) kicked into action. We sent out an email to LWV Voter Service volunteers and about seventy-five members responded to the request to go to voters’ homes to witness residents complete their absentee ballot and to provide the required witness signature. Around twenty-five volunteers were actively involved.

How did this system work?

1. The City Clerk’s office gave the caller the phone number for the Voter ID Coalition Helpline and the voter called the Helpline and left a message with their request.
2. Ron Shanovich (Voter ID Coalition Helpline Coordinator) and Marian Matthews responded to individual requests to explain the process and get the voter’s address.
3. Volunteers first reviewed requests and decided if they were willing to drive to the address. They then called those individuals and made arrangements to observe the absentee voting and sign as witnesses.
4. The voter would come to the front of their home or apartment building, complete the absentee ballot and sign the absentee ballot envelope with the volunteer observing from a distance. Then the ballot envelope would be placed outside the front of the building, the voter would go inside, and the volunteer would pick up the ballot, sign the envelope as the witness, and take the ballot to a library drop-off.

Thanks to our volunteers, over one hundred absentee voters who live on their own or were otherwise unable to obtain a witness signature were able to get their absentee ballot voting witnessed and signed. “Thank you very much for responding to my message. I am happy for being able to vote absentee with the help of Marian and Ruth-Ann. The witnessing protocol by social distancing was nicely implemented,” emailed one voter to the League.

Brook Soltvedt Featured: Elderly Poll Workers and COVID 19

Excerpts from Democracy 2020 and NBC News’ article Elderly Workers Run Elections. But COVID-19 will keep many home

Brook Soltvedt, our own League member, board vice president, and webmaster, was one of the poll workers featured in “Elderly Workers Run Elections. But Covid-19 Will Keep Many Home” (Carrie Levine, Democracy 2020, May 13, 2020, with NBC News).

The article featured interviews with elderly poll workers and election officials from Maine to Iowa, Alabama, and Wisconsin who expressed major concerns over the dilemma of protecting “precinct election officials” and recruiting sufficient numbers of election officials—over half of the country’s poll workers are over 61 years of age and many had decided not to risk their health by working at the polls. The executive director of the Milwaukee election commission shared the sudden loss of voting sites and election officials experienced in Milwaukee.

Here is Brook’s story about her personal experiences related to working as a chief inspector at the polls on April 7:

“Brook Soltvedt, 60, a longtime poll worker in Madison, chose to work that election. She worried most about contracting COVID-19, then infecting her husband, who is 78. But she knew, too, that many poll workers were backing out.
So before election day, she stocked a separate apartment in their basement with groceries and supplies—and with everything she needed to continue her work from home as a textbook editor. After the election, she quarantined herself for two weeks.

Only then, Soltvedt said, did she return to ‘living above ground.’”

**PBS Celebrates Suffragists**

PBS is airing a few specials to celebrate the centennial of a woman’s right to vote in America.

*The Vote*, July 6 and July 7, PBS American Experience: "Women weren’t given the vote. They took it."

*And She Could Be Next*, June 29 and June 30, PBS POV miniseries: “The story of a defiant movement of women of color transforming politics from the ground up.”

See PBS’s press release for additional specials that will be airing in honor of the centennial.

**LWVDC Annual Meeting Election Results**

Thanks to the 159 members who voted via mailed paper ballot due to the pandemic, here are the newly elected 2020-2021 Board members and new members of the nominating committee.

**Officers:**
- President - Christine Clements
- Co-Vice President - Marilyn Stephen
- Co-Vice President - Jean Jacobson
- Treasurer - Jean Jacobson

**Directors:**
- Fundraising Chair - Linda Dietrich
- Membership Co-Chair - Mary Ellen Schmit
- Membership Co-Chair - Joan Schwartz
- Program Chair - Georgiana Hernandez
- Publicity Co-Chair - Bonnie Chang
- Publicity Co-Chair - Laura Grueneberg

**Nominating Committee for 2020-2021:**
- Jan Van Vleck, Chair
- Elizabeth Kanne
- Gail Krc

The Board will elect two additional members from the Board to the nominating committee.

The 2020-2021 Program Focus Areas and the 2020-2021 Budget were passed. Programs will focus on Making Democracy Work and the Climate Crisis.

The Annual Meeting Reports and Annual Meeting Materials sent out to all members can be viewed on our website.
Thank You Outgoing Board Members

Proclamation of Recognition and Honor for the Outgoing Members of the 2019-2020 League of Women Voters of Dane County Board of Directors on this occasion of the transition of office from the 2019-2020 League of Women Voters of Dane County Board of Directors to the 2020-2021 Board

WHEREAS Aileen Nettleton, serving as the Dane County League of Woman Voters President for the 2018-2019 and 2019-2020 years, has been a benevolent taskmaster, a detailed and thorough editor, an open and enthusiastic opinion seeker, a conscientious calendar manager, an inclusive team builder, an able navigator of challenging environments and an encouraging and collaborative leader;

WHEREAS Mary Anglim, having served for the past two years as Program Director and from 2014 to 2018 as Membership Director, with flexibility and a deep personal commitment to democratic process, graced all the members of those committees and other board members with her profound knowledge of a wide range of community issues both past and present and of positions advanced by the League, resulting in the creation of meaningful and relevant forums and other educational activities that have advanced the League’s ultimate goal of creating a more perfect democracy;

WHEREAS Sally Gleason has served on the board as Membership Co-Director for the past two years, demonstrating exceptionally proactive and wise leadership in formal and informal outreach to membership that has left this organization significantly stronger in membership numbers, engagement, and outlook, and has developed a more welcoming, inclusive league, making a home for inquiry and reflection and has diligently worked to open opportunities to all;

WHEREAS Helen Horn, having served for the last two years as a scrupulous and trustworthy Finance Director and as Treasurer from 2019-2020, as well as from 1994-1996 and 2012-2014, and as President from 1994-1995, has stepped up in an unselfish and willing manner to fill gaps as needed, is a dedicated and punctilious manager of League funds, a builder of sound League financial systems, an executor of wise investment strategies, a supplier of local League history, a generous supporter and a flexible, reliable and gracious colleague;

WHEREAS Brook Soltvedt has served as the Vice President for the 2018-2020 years, as well as having served as Communications Director from 2008-2012 and President from 2017-2018, has been our VP extraordinaire one-stop-shop, an authoritative and informed author and communicator, a meticulous and diligent editor, a generous giver of time, talent and resources, a skilled and competent systems creator, a thoughtful webmaster, a creative problem solver, the board’s personal help desk for all things League of Women Voters, and our community contacts and connections expert;

WHEREAS Donna Van Bogaert having served for the last year as the immensely creative and knowledgeable Public Relations Director, offering her talents to develop processes and standardize work products in PR, jumping in with her strategic insight to assist at the Board planning meeting and continuing on the planning committee, serving on the nominating committee and always sharing her wisdom, balanced perspective and quick humor;

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED that the 2020-2021 League of Women Voters of Dane County Board of Directors is forever grateful for the dedicated efforts of these outstanding women leaders and appreciative of their impactful contributions and the solid foundation they have provided, and the 2020-21 Board wishes them satisfaction in their accomplishments and joy in their newly acquired freedom.

A Moment of Serendipity as an Absentee Ballot Witness Volunteer

Barbara Arnold

Saturday morning, April 4, 2020: I had signed up as a Ballot Witness for the Madison City Clerk’s Office and the League of Women Voters of Dane County. I called Ellen, whom I was assigned to; we agreed to meet just outside her apartment complex in downtown Madison at 10:00 a.m. I told her that I’d be wearing white gloves and a mask. She asked, “Do you know how to get masks? I really want one.”

I told her that a friend of mine, who is also an absentee ballot witness volunteer, was making a few masks. I said I’d ask Kathy if she had one that I could take to Ellen when I drove to witness her ballot. Kathy worked furiously so that she could place a home-made mask in a plastic bag for me to pick up at her home before heading to Ellen’s.

My hero, Kathy, had attached the plastic-protected mask to her doorknocker just inside the storm door. I picked it up and just as I was getting back into my Highlander, Kathy came to her door; we said hello, thumbs up, and I thanked her from the recommended social distance. Off I went to meet Ellen.

I called Ellen when I reached the apartment complex and told her how we would make the exchange: her ballot and Kathy’s mask. Ellen placed her ballot in its envelope, signed it, and placed it at a safe distance where I could sign as her witness. I took the ballot and then placed the mask where she could retrieve it. She loved the colors, the style, and Kathy’s note. “How did she know I was Jewish?,” Ellen wondered. She didn’t but I told her Kathy is Jewish also.

As I was getting ready to head for my car, Ellen stopped me: “Do you think she might make one for my partner who lives in Texas?” Wow! I told her I’d ask Kathy and get back to her. Two days later, Kathy made another mask and sent it to Ellen’s partner. As a gesture of thanks, Ellen promised to contribute to a COVID-19 emergency relief fund of her choice, probably the Foundation for Madison’s Public Schools.

After the ballot/mask exchange with one very appreciative voter, I took the ballot to the Pinney Library drop-off box, where lots of voters were leaving theirs. What an exuberant sense of community in these very challenging times of “safer at home” and “social distancing.” This is what democracy looks like.

Later, Ellen sent me another text thanking me for coming and telling me that what Kathy wrote on her note in the Jewish tradition – “Wear it in good health!” – is what Ellen’s parents always said to her. Serendipity – you betcha.
Flood Resistant Buildings Needed in Madison

This editorial was drafted by Caryl Terrell and Meg Gordon, members of the Climate Crisis Program Sub-Committee. It was approved by the Executive Committee and sent to the Wisconsin State Journal on May 23, 2020. The ordinance passed by a unanimous vote by the Madison City Council on June 2.

Flood resistant buildings needed in Madison
(re. Stormwater Proposal Will Hike Cost of Housing in Madison, May 16, 2020, Wisconsin State Journal)

According to Bradley Hutter and Bill Connors, the City of Madison’s revised stormwater standards will add to the cost of new and renovated buildings. No one will dispute there will be costs.

Forward-thinking developers know they must build for the future, not continue traditional construction strategies that worked before climate change entered the picture. Moderate cost increases to new construction and renovation of older buildings are a drop in the proverbial “flood bucket” compared to the costs home and business owners will incur at their expense, not the builder’s, if a cycle of build, destroy, build anew is allowed to persist.

The August 2018 flood cost individuals collectively between $17.5 million and $30 million. Total damage to public infrastructure was $3.94 million (City Engineering 2019 fact sheet). Common sense tells us we need to avoid repeat scenarios. Public and private infrastructure that cannot withstand the fallout from extreme weather events we have recently experienced and that up-to-date scientific data tell us we can expect in the coming years have no place in the City of Madison.

Madison’s Central Public Library third floor patio is a prime example of a green roof that absorbs rainfall and cools and cleans urban air. Grass swales, rain gardens, rain barrels and cisterns harvest stormwater for reuse and natural purification by native plants. Green swales between parking lots and street gutters prevent excess water and pollutants from entering our lakes, our basements and our businesses. These are benefits we can all support.

Businesses, employees and other potential residents prefer communities that are preparing for the challenges extreme weather present—be they flood or drought—and for the health threats from air pollution and water contamination.

In the last few years Madison and Dane County have laid out the steps needed to tackle these challenges, while converting to clean energy sources, electrifying transportation systems, and attracting next generation businesses.

We are a community and as such we all have a part to play together. The City’s revised Stormwater Ordinance provides leadership. The plan incorporates green infrastructure and a path for proactive decision-making using hard data from recently conducted watershed studies. This plan ensures that our public works projects deal with flooding at the watershed level. These are steps we must take to build a more resilient and equitable community for all.

The League of Women Voters believes that climate change is a serious threat facing our nation and our planet. An interrelated approach consistent with the best available climate science—including through energy conservation, air pollution controls, building resilience, and promotion of renewable resources—is necessary to protect public health and defend the overall integrity of the global ecosystem.

The League of Women Voters of Dane County is proud to support adoption of Madison’s revised stormwater ordinance.

Aileen Nettleton, President, League of Women Voters of Dane County
Climate Corner Comes of Age  
—Adding Scope and a Name Change
Meg Gordon, mbgordon721@gmail.com

*Climate Corner* is growing up. For those unfamiliar with this experimental blog, it was initiated by the 2019-20 Climate Crisis Team to provide a sweeping overview of the underlying components contributing to the climate crisis. Now it is time to evolve.

To this end, the Program Committee is launching an expanded blog space titled *Swinging for the Fences, bat for climate and democracy*. Blogs will serve as companion pieces that support and round out League programming and actions. The new title is a tip of the hat to the game of baseball, co-opting its expression for giving your all, swinging for that home run. For us, that means taking actions to ensure a just democracy and a livable planet.

First up, we feature community member Dr. Kenneth Potter. For three decades and counting, Potter has been sharing his expertise as a hydrologist for all our benefit. Potter was originally scheduled to speak on April 5, 2020, headlining the fourth climate crisis forum *Revenge of the Marshes—Preserving the Wetlands That Protect Us*. It was scheduled to be held in the environmentally instructive setting: Holy Wisdom Monastery in Middleton.

The COVID-19 pandemic brought that event to a halt. But when the City of Madison needed to garner support for updating its stormwater ordinance, Potter’s planned primer on Dane County’s flooding problem simply couldn’t wait. His talk is now a virtual forum, the first in a two-part set that completes the *Revenge of the Marshes* program. Part two, a conversation on the role marshlands play in flood control will be out soon. Watch for this lively exchange of information between prairie and climate experts Greg Armstrong and Ralph Petersen, respectively, along with Gail Shea, League member and wetlands advocate.

This package launches our new virtual forum series, under the name *Issues on Deck*. The blog, forum, and voting issue constellation are complementary components designed to enhance our well-researched message to voters. Issues will morph as innings do. And we will be strategically blogging to add heft from our figurative place in the dugout—highlighting local activists, relevant science, and important legislation in the hopes that you as batters (voters) will take a swing and run with it. Information is power. So is voting. And that is what this League is all about.

*Of Note: Blogging is a team effort and we welcome guest writers should inspiration strike. So please don’t hesitate to pitch your proposed piece our way. mbgordon721@gmail.com*

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### Hydrology Expert Tirelessly Supports Community through Public Engagement

In December 1978, ink barely dry on his doctoral thesis, hydrologist Ken Potter arrived in Madison to take up his new faculty position in Civil and Environmental Engineering at the University of Wisconsin.

Fast forward thirty-two years and Potter, now emeritus, is still sharing his continually expanding expertise, teaching Dane County community members about the link between climate change, land use change, and the uptick in rainfall and runoff. [Read more.](#)
New Members
We welcome these new members who joined us since March. An updated member directory is available on our website. If you have forgotten the password, there is a link to contact the webmaster for help.

Marcus Allen  
Julie Allen  
Gavin Borg  
Mikal Borg  
Carolyn Buzby  
Vivian Chappell  
Kimberlee Cox  
Charlene Denys  
Maree Elowson  
Faith Fitzpatrick  
Shelby Fry  
Sue Gilbert  
Lynn Glueck  
Virginia Huber  
Jaclyn Jacobson  
Lisa Janairo  
Ginny Kester  
Nina Mansholt  
Diane Norman  
Paula Primm  
Melanie Sax  
Susan Webster

Contributions
Our work is supported by financial contributions beyond membership dues. Thank you to these members (bold) and nonmember supporters who donated between March and May.

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Brook & David Soltvedt  
Caryl Terrell  
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Carol Toussaint  
Suzanne van Landingham  
Ellen Webber  
Gregory Ziegler  
Alliant Energy Employee Match Fund

Thank you to these generous contributors to our Centennial Challenge matching fund toward the important work of the LWDC.

Fund for Women - $500  
Pines and Bach, LLC - $100
Upcoming Events

June 25-26  LWV National Convention (Virtual)
Aug. 12  Board Meeting, Virtual, Time TBD

2020 Elections

June 25 – LWVWI publishes Fall Primary voter guide
June 25 – Absentee Ballots sent out
Aug 11 – Fall Primary Election
Sept 17 – LWVWI publishes Fall Election voter guide
Nov 3 – Fall General Election

Outgoing board members were presented with yellow roses as a token of our appreciation.

Top: Mary Anglim, Sally Gleason, Brook Soltvedt
Bottom: Aileen Nettleton, Donna Van Bogaert, Helen Horn