President’s Message: Let’s Hear It for Weak Ties!

Barb Feeney (she/they), president@lwvdanecounty.org

Since the worst of the pandemic started to recede and life resumed some semblance of normal, we started hearing, reading, and at times witnessing instances of truly bizarre behavior, sometimes dangerous, sometimes just... monumentally unkind. To me, it has been a lesson in how fragile the...
fabric of our world really is. Apparently, we need to be reminded frequently of how to behave—just by being around other human beings on a regular basis.

We are already aware of the importance of close relationships for providing emotional support, a sense of security, and the comfort of being “known.” Often neglected is the value of casual friendships. In the online magazine Blue Zones.com, a story by health journalist Judith Graham takes on the topic of casual friendships and the benefits they offer. In *Why We Need Casual Friendships Too*, she writes: “Casual relationships have several benefits, according to researchers who’ve studied them. These ties can cultivate a sense of belonging, provide bursts of positive energy, motivate us to engage in activities, and expose us to new information and opportunities—all without the emotional challenges that often attend close relationships with family and friends.”

Some research suggests that people with many of what researchers call “weak ties” are healthier, both physically and psychologically.

Hmmm...and what exactly does this have to do with “empowering voters and defending democracy?” This: in the months ahead, LWVDC will be offering regular opportunities to form, and in some cases re-form, those magical, under-appreciated “weak ties.” Watch for the LWVDC Enews that lands in your email box every Tuesday to find out about these opportunities to engage, learn, and have fun with some of the most interesting people in Dane County. See you there, IRL!

**League Library Liaisons: Beyond Madison**

*Kathleen Fullin, kathyfullin@gmail.com*

City of Madison residents have the opportunity to obtain voting information and to register to vote at their local libraries, many of which are open evenings and weekends when the City Clerk’s office is closed. At voting outreach events, when registration on site is not feasible, our volunteers encourage Madison voters who need to register on paper to visit their library.

To expand the reach of these resources beyond the city of Madison, 14 League liaisons are working with their non-Madison community libraries in Dane County to help their libraries provide information about voting and assist voters.

They have contacted their libraries to encourage them to make our voting and registration bookmarks available to interested patrons. We also encourage them to provide the bookmarks to adults who apply for a new
Save the Dates
Make sure to save the dates for these upcoming events. More information about both will be coming soon.

Lively Issues Luncheon, April 29
The keynote speaker will be Gloria Ladson Billings, Professor Emerita from UW-Madison. She is a Fellow of the British Academy and Immediate Past President of the National Academy of Education. She has also received the Defender of Democracy Award, Voter Service Award, and Fifty Year Member Recognition.

LWVDC Annual Meeting, June 4
The LWVDC Annual Meeting will be held in person on Sunday, June 4, at the Elver Park shelter. After three years of conducting the business of the League online, we are excited to be gathering in person. We will start to gather at noon, and the actual business meeting will begin at 1 p.m. If event planning is your jam and you want to be part of the planning team, contact Barb Feeney at president@lwvdanecounty.org.

library card because many new applicants have probably recently moved to that community and need to register to vote at their new address.

Liaisons have also encouraged their libraries to make available our new bookmark about the function and importance of the Wisconsin Supreme Court, and we have distributed 600 of these bookmarks to area libraries outside of Madison. (The Madison libraries provide our bookmarks to patrons and new applicants, and make available our court bookmark as well.) Liaisons have also set up voter outreach events at their libraries and have explored whether library staff would be comfortable helping patrons use library computers to register to vote.

Our League’s goal is to encourage non-Madison municipal clerks to designate their community libraries as voter registration locations, which is permitted by state statute. Some non-Madison clerks might not understand that non-Madison voters would appreciate the opportunity to register to vote on weekends or evenings, even though the library is often very close to the municipal office.

Because this effort requires cooperation between the library and the municipal clerk, we seek League volunteers from the local community to be library liaisons. If you have a strong connection to any of the following communities, we are looking for liaisons to their libraries: Belleville, Marshall, Mazomanie, and Mount Horeb.

For more information, see our library liaison web page at www.lwvdanecounty.org/library-liasons or contact Kathleen Fullin (kathyfullin@gmail.com) and Shirley Haidinger (haidis@aol.com), the coordinators of the Library Liaison project.

Speak Up to Shape Outcomes: Empowering Voters, Defending Democracy
Sam Braithwait, advocacy@lwvdanecounty.org

Feel that urge to speak up and speak out? The League offers several ways for members to do just that, because a healthy democracy depends upon active public participation. Both speaking up and speaking out help improve our understanding of situations and potential solutions, and both help shape policy outcomes for current and future issues. The League encourages your participation in healthy, constructive public dialog because:
1. Your words enlighten and educate and might give someone else the courage to speak up about an issue.

2. Everyone benefits when your views and opinions are shared. We should never underestimate education or overestimate knowledge.

3. Staying silent can encourage misinformation and manipulation because silence is often accepted as approval.

We encourage you to engage with the following options.

**That Is Not True!**

Did you spot misinformation in social media? Consider being a League Spotter. We can only combat misinformation if we know it is out there. To this end, the League of Women Voters of Wisconsin is relaunching its social media monitoring program for the 2023 spring elections.

There are two levels of involvement:

1. Be a League Spotter: The League will train you to be a social media watcher. Then you can sign up and complete one two-hour shift weekly.
2. Be a Tipster: If you see something you think might be misinformation or disinformation, report it to the League tip line.

**Advocacy Corps Letter-Writing Campaign!**

Be part of the letter-writing campaign. LWVDC’s Advocacy Corps dedicates its work to keeping the public informed of and involved in pressing issues facing Dane County and Wisconsin. The League provides resources to assist anyone (League membership not required) who wants to write on matters of concern. The letters must reflect your voice as an individual citizen, not the League.

To make it easier to express your views, the League offers the following:

- A slide presentation with tips about how to write an effective letter.
- Quick links to all the newspapers in Dane County, the governor, and the legislature.

Once you’ve sent your letter, let us know! Please fill out this quick form to tell us about your submission.

Do you need some background information on issues and example talking points to assist you with your letters? Check out information on the League websites:

- Dane County: League of Women Voters of Dane County (lwvdanecounty.org)
- Wisconsin: League of Women Voters of Wisconsin | MyLO (lwv.org)
- United States: League of Women Voters (lwv.org)
Forum Recap: Wisconsin Supreme Court: Why Your Vote Matters

Janine Edwards, janine.c.edwards@gmail.com

In the February 9 forum titled “Wisconsin Supreme Court: Why Your Vote Matters,” Christa Westerberg from Pines Bach LLP gave a summary of the four levels of courts in Wisconsin.

The Supreme Court is the state's highest court. Located in the state capitol, the Supreme Court has appellate jurisdiction over all Wisconsin courts and has discretion to determine which cases it will review. The Supreme Court also may hear original actions cases that have not been heard previously in another Wisconsin court. There are seven justices, each elected for 10 years. The Chief Justice is now elected by the other justices for a term of two years. Annette Ziegler is the current Chief Justice. Wisconsin Court System - Supreme Court

The Court of Appeals is the state's intermediate court, which hears cases appealed from lower courts. The court is composed of 16 judges from four districts headquartered in Milwaukee, Waukesha, Wausau, and Madison. Wisconsin Court System - Court of Appeals

The next level is the Circuit courts, which are the state's trial courts. Circuit courts have original jurisdiction in all civil and criminal matters within the state, including probate, juvenile, and traffic matters, as well as civil and criminal jury trials. Wisconsin Court System - Circuit Courts

The first level is the Municipal court, which hears and decides cases involving traffic, parking, and ordinance matters, including first-time drunken driving offenses and non-criminal juvenile matters. Wisconsin Court System - Municipal Courts

Robert Yablon from the UW Law School then addressed several important cases that the Wisconsin Supreme Court decided within the past year.

In Johnson v. Wisconsin Elections Commission, the Wisconsin Supreme Court took original action and adopted a “least change” approach, which was advocated by the Republican-controlled Legislature. In their first decision, the justices adopted Governor Evers’ maps, which added one minority-majority district north of Milwaukee. The Legislature asked the U.S. Supreme Court to hear the case. The U.S. Supreme Court sent the maps back to Wisconsin, saying that not enough evidence was presented to justify an additional district. At that time, the Wisconsin Supreme Court adopted the Legislature’s maps. There are paths to legally challenge the current voting district maps.

In Teigen v. Wisconsin Elections Commission, the Wisconsin Supreme Court outlawed drop boxes and banned the return of absentee ballots via a third party or agent. A challenge in federal court by Law Forward and the LWVWI reversed that decision for persons with disabilities. Drop boxes remain banned.
In *State ex rel. Kaul v. Prehn*, the Wisconsin Supreme Court’s decision effectively gives individual executive appointees the right to remain in office indefinitely if the Senate refuses to confirm the Governor’s appointees. This decision has affected more than 100 of Governor Evers’s appointees.

Finally, Yablon and Westerberg discussed other cases of serious concern to Wisconsin voters. We need to show we actually are paying attention to election outcomes.

In the primary election held on February 21, the Wisconsin Supreme Court field of four candidates was narrowed down to two. The Wisconsin Elections Commission reports that unofficial results show that approximately 20.5% of Wisconsin’s voting-age population turned out to vote. This seems low compared to general elections held in the fall of even years, but it is impressive compared to previous Primary elections with a Supreme Court contest, with 16.06% turnout in 2020, 12.12% in 2018, and 12.96% in 2016. Janet Protasiewicz and Daniel Kelly will face off in the April 4 election.

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**Cultivating a “Leaderful” Mindset at LWVDC**

*Kimberly Rooney (she/her), LWVDC Leadership Development Fellow, krooney@lwvdanecounty.org*

After spending the fall months designing initiatives to engage LWVDC’s newer members and budding volunteers, this spring I’ll shift my focus to the other end of the ladder of engagement. In the next few months, I will turn my attention towards leadership and explore questions such as: How can LWVDC continue to support its leaders? How can the organization improve and expand its leadership pipeline? What does leadership mean in the League?

In my research so far, I’ve encountered a new term that has piqued my curiosity: “leaderful.” For example, an organization can be leaderful or can take a leaderful approach to leadership development. The term both intrigued and baffled me, so I found the 2005 article by Joseph Raelin “We the Leaders: In Order to Form a Leaderful Organization” in the Journal Leadership & Organizational Studies. What I found was a practical, yet transformative explanation of what leadership can be.

As I’ve said before, research often confirms what many of us already know implicitly. However, stating these things explicitly with data and experience to back them up can still be enlightening. This was particularly true for me as I read Raelin’s description of traditional Western/American leadership models. First, he says, this model is serial: one leader replaces another in simple succession. It’s individual: there is one single leader at one time. It’s controlling: the leader has ultimate responsibility and say. And it’s dispassionate: a leader makes tough decisions detached from emotions. According to Raelin, this model is out-of-date and limiting. I tend to agree.

Granted, the long line of LWVDC leaders have never totally embodied this model of leadership. Our grassroots, member-driven identity naturally counteracts it. However, traces of this model do exist in our cultural consciousness, so it’s important to outwardly name these embedded trends in order to rethink leadership.

The leaderful mindset provides the framework to do so. In the leaderful model, according to Raelin, leadership is concurrent: more than one leader exists at a time. It’s collective: people work as leaders together, “leadership is a plural phenomenon” (22). It’s collaborative: all members of the community matter. Finally, it’s compassionate: leaders extend an “unadulterated commitment to preserving the
dignity of others” (23). A leaderful mindset helps organizations build capacity, grow trust, and foster belonging.

LWVDC already has many aspects of a leaderful organization and a good structure to support this approach. Still, other experts on leaderful organizations emphasize the importance of weaving leadership development and succession planning into the fabric of the organization so that it’s a continuous mindset rather than a one-off project (Heyman ed. 2011, Martinelli 2022). LWVDC members involved in the Strategic Planning process are in agreement that leadership development and a strong plan for leader succession will be a pillar of strategy moving forward. With these goals in mind, I look forward to spending the coming months exploring how LWVDC can advance our leaderful mindset.

### Board Succession Planning: Building a Leadership Pipeline

*Dr. Mara Eisch, Vice President, [vp@lwvdanecounty.org](mailto:vp@lwvdanecounty.org)*

The LWVDC leadership is working on strategic planning, which includes building a leadership pipeline within the LWVDC. To learn more about this process, Wendy Hathaway, McKenzie Zdrale, and I participated in the workshop Board Succession Planning: Building the Leadership Pipeline presented by Frank Martinelli, President of the Center for Public Skills Training.

Our succession planning will be “a planned program to ensure that high-performing board leaders are developed to successfully replace board and committee leaders whenever needed to carry out the mission, vision and goals.” Sounds like a mouthful, but, in essence, we want members to feel comfortable and confident moving into leadership positions within LWVDC.

High-performing boards are dynamic, visionary, and supported by well-developed governance. Supporting individuals as they do the work of the LWVDC is paramount to achieving this goal. Our pipeline will not be a dead end. The idea is to envision a “life cycle” of a board leader from before board service to after board service.

To effectively accomplish this goal, we will work on developing a governance committee, define roles, engage in ongoing recruitment and training, and promote diversity and commonality. Planning for leadership succession is intentional, and we plan to support members as they move through the development pipeline.

While strategic planning continues to unfold, a Governance Committee is something that we can begin developing now. If you enjoy strategic and process thinking, enjoy the nuts and bolts of establishing the processes of governance, or are curious about governance work before you volunteer, please contact me at [vp@lwvdanecounty.org](mailto:vp@lwvdanecounty.org). I am happy to chat over coffee, Zoom, or email.

There will also be a Zoom meeting for a general discussion about the Governance Committee and what we might want it to look like at LWVDC on March 29, 2023, from 6:30-7:30 p.m. [Click here to register.](#)
March Book Discussion: *Dark Money: The Hidden History of the Billionaires Behind the Rise of the Radical Right* by Jane Mayer

Drawing from hundreds of interviews and extensive research, Jane Mayer provides vivid portraits of the secretive and deep-pocketed figures crafting an American government that serves their interests and ideology. *Dark Money* has been hailed as an essential read for those concerned about the direction of American democracy.

Discussion Dates/Times:
- Tuesday, March 21, 2023: 10-11:30 a.m. at Pinney Library, Madison
- Saturday, March 25, 2023: 10-11:30 a.m. over Zoom

Email books@lwvdanecounty.org by March 17 if you are interested in attending and indicate which session.

We encourage members to submit suggestions at any time for book titles for future discussions.

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**Volunteer Profile: Deb Hanrahan**

*Barb Feeney (she/they), president@lwvdanecounty.org*

*LWVDC proudly wears its identity as a grassroots and volunteer-led organization. Our ability to carry out our mission of “empowering voters and defending democracy” rests on the willingness of our members to take on tasks and carry them out, often without notice or fanfare. We are happy to use this space to introduce you to Deb Hanrahan, one of our volunteers.*

If you have visited one of our online volunteer signup forms, you are likely seeing the handiwork of Deb Hanrahan. Despite being a working person in her daytime life, Deb manages to fit in being one of our behind-the-scenes people who does the essential task of creating sign-ups for our outreach events. We appreciate that she always takes the time to find the perfect graphic background so things never get dull!
She maintains the volunteer calendar and provides event coordinators a checklist with their event information and volunteers. She says “Because my day job as an IT Product Manager at American Family Insurance keeps me pretty busy, I have limited capacity to join the events themselves, so I’m glad to have this opportunity to put my technical skills to work for LWVDC!”

**How did you get involved with LWVDC?**
When my wife Susan and I moved to Madison from the Washington, D.C. metro area in 2006, LWVDC’s *Candidates’ Answers* were invaluable in helping us learn more about our local and state offices and their incumbent or prospective officeholders. I was inspired to join, but had little availability to participate actively in scheduled events. So when the opportunity to help with the technically intricate calendar coordination workflow arose, I was excited to be able to pitch in. I encourage anyone reading this to watch for, or help create, a volunteer opportunity that will work for you.

**Who or what inspires you?**
Generous and thoughtful people, astounding natural vistas, remarkable music, books, and other art all inspire me!

**What do you like to do with your free time?**
Susan and I enjoy hiking and biking, and supporting our awesome local businesses on the isthmus. We have five adopted pets (three dogs, two cats) that keep us busy! I am a music junkie with widely varied tastes. We often go to shows at The Bur Oak, Stoughton Opera House, Orpheum, and Sylvee. I’m a fountain pen hobbyist, a board game enthusiast, and never far from reading material, either news or literary fiction/sci-fi.

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**Help Wanted: Volunteer Bookkeeper**

Do you or someone you know want to put your bookkeeping skills to use in support of LWVDC’s finances?

We’re looking for a volunteer to work with the League’s Treasurer 10-20 hours per month on tasks such as:

- Recording transactions (invoices, expenses, deposits, and checks) into QuickBooks.
- Reconciling monthly credit card statements.
- Reconciling the fundraising subsidiary ledger to QuickBooks.
- Reconciling the monthly credit card processing account to fundraising transactions.
- Preparing month-end financial statements for review by the Treasurer.

Basic bookkeeping/accounting knowledge is a must, as well as experience with QuickBooks accounting software or similar software. The time commitment will vary, depending on the time of year and the activities of the League.

Contact Jean Jacobson at treasurer@lwvdanecounty.org for more information.
LWVDC Annual Budget Process
Jean Jacobson (she/her), treasurer@lwvdanecounty.org

LWVDC Domain Chairs (Fund Development, Membership, Program Advocacy, and Voter Service) and their committee members met throughout February to prepare their budget requests for the upcoming Fiscal Year 2023-24.

Involving Chairs and their committees in budget preparation is a relatively new process that was implemented a couple of years ago. More collaboration and participation in the budget process leads to a better end product because more people bring their knowledge, ideas, and expertise to the discussion.

The draft budget will be reviewed by the Finance Committee on March 9 and by the Board on March 22. If more Board discussion is required, a second meeting will be held to resolve any issues and vote on approval. The approved Budget will be sent to all League members for review as part of the Annual Meeting package and will be presented for members to vote on at the Annual Meeting on June 4.

LWVDC Strategic Planning: Our Vision (and Our Challenges)
Wendy Hathaway (she/her), wendy@lwvdanecounty.org

Members of the Board, along with Leadership Development Fellow Kimmy Rooney and Executive Director Wendy Hathaway, convened on February 13 for the second of three scheduled Strategic Planning retreats. The group reviewed the vision for the League generated by two dozen members at the January retreat, trying to answer the question: “What do we want to see happen and who do we want to be in the next three to five years, as a result of our direct actions?” Participants also discussed the barriers that might stand in the way of achieving that vision and began to think through how to solve these challenges.

More work will be happening between now and the final scheduled retreat in late March. The results of this strategic planning process will be shared with members this spring/summer.

Congratulations to Margaret Fuguitt, winner of a $25 Downtown Madison eGift Card! Thank you to everyone who participated in the LWVDC organizational survey in December. Your feedback has already been valuable as we think about where to focus our time, energy, and resources and how we can better serve our members and the community.
February 2023 Board of Directors Meeting Highlights

- A representative from eCIO was invited to present a status update on the League’s Memorial Trust Fund investments. eCIO is the local investment advisory firm LWVDC began contracting with in March 2022 to manage our assets.
- The Board discussed and identified high-level priorities in preparation for budget preparation.
- Planning is in the works around the logistics and format for the LWVDC Annual Meeting.

LWVDC Board meeting agendas and approved minutes can be found online at www.lwvdanecounty.org/board.

LWVDC Awarded Three Grants by LWVEF

Fund Development Committee

The League of Women Voters Education Fund (LWVEF) awarded LWV Dane County three pass-through grants that undertake voter outreach activities aimed at historically disenfranchised voters.

- **Former and Currently Incarcerated Voter Outreach** — $1,000 | Project Leads: Earnestine Moss, Dane County Voter ID Coalition Co-Chair and Julia Gilden, Dane County Voter ID Steering Committee member
- **Youth Voter Outreach** — $750 | Project Leads: LWVDC High School Voter Education Action Team
- **New Citizens Voter Outreach** — $750 | Project Lead: Barb Feeney, LWVDC Board President

Watch upcoming issues of the *Bulletin* for more details about the work being done in these areas.

Thank You from the Bottom of Our Hearts

We’re grateful for the generous support of our members, who donated $3,587 last month to celebrate the founding of the League of Women Voters on February 14, 1920.

More than 103 years later, LWVDC remains committed to empowering voters and defending democracy. You can donate anytime:

- Online at www.lwvdanecounty.org/valentine
- By mail by sending a check payable to League of Women Voters of Dane County to 720 Hill St, Ste 200, Madison, WI 53705-3539

Calling All New 50-Year League Members

Every year, we honor everyone who has been a member of the League for 50 years. If you joined the League in 1973 or before and have not been recognized as a Life Member, please call the office (608-232-9447) or email office@lwvdanecounty.org. All members are encouraged to contact the office if they know someone in our League who reaches their 50-year anniversary this year.
Contributions
Thank you to these supporters who donated in January 2023.

General Donations
James Cory
Dr. Mara Eisch
Sally Gleason
Lola Gregg

Paul Harris
Maureen Kind
Charles Kreimendahl
Zachary Levin

Amy Moran
Luke Sackash
Joan Schwarz
Nancy & Donald Tubesing

Community & Corporate Donations
Alliant Energy
Promega Corporation

New Members
We welcome these new members who joined us in January 2023. An updated member directory is available on our website. NOTE: The password for the directory page was changed on April 26, 2022. If you need the new password, contact the webmaster for help.

Gladys Bacalao
Kathleen Lowry

Michelle Meyer
Charlotte Owens

Julie Urban

Discussion Units
Many League members meet in one of five units to discuss the topic of each forum, using the resource materials provided by the program planners to guide the conversation. The discussion concludes with recommendations for further study or action. Units meet regularly at different times and locations, including via Zoom. All in-person meetings occur in Madison unless otherwise noted. Find a unit meeting that's convenient for you and participate! Details below.

Please contact the Unit Discussion Leader if interested in participating in a Unit Discussion so that you will get a Zoom link. Consult the calendar for the most up-to-date information about specific meetings.

Unit: Prairie Ridge (For Prairie Ridge residents only)
Time: 3:30 p.m., third Monday of month
Location: Virtual, via Zoom through fall/winter
Leaders: Dot Whiting

Unit: West / Middleton
Time: 6:30 p.m., third Monday of month
Location: Virtual, via Zoom through fall/winter
Leader: Gloria Meyer (608) 347-9713

Unit: Central West
Time: 12:45 p.m., third Tuesday of month
Location: Virtual, via Zoom
Leader: Kathy Johnson (608) 238–1785

Unit: Northeast Side
Time: 3:30 p.m., third Wednesday of month
Location: Virtual, via Zoom
Leaders: Karen Gunderson (608) 729–4351

Do you want to join the League?
Sign up for a membership online
Unit: Downtown (Capitol Lakes)
Time: 5:30 p.m., third Wednesday of month
Location: In person, Premiere Room at Capitol Lakes, 333 W. Main St.
Leader: Aileen Nettleton

Upcoming Events

March 7  Advocacy Corps, 5:30 p.m.  
March 8  LWVDC Board Meeting, 5:30 p.m.  
March 9  Virtual Forum: Judicial Integrity, 6:30 p.m.  
March 13  Voter Service Steering Committee, 2 p.m.  
March 15  Northeast Side Discussion Unit, 3:30 p.m.  
March 15  Downtown Discussion Unit, 5:30 p.m.  
March 20  Membership Team, noon  
March 20  Prairie Ridge (Oakwood Village) Discussion Unit, 3:30 p.m.  
March 20  West/Middleton Discussion Unit, 6:30 p.m.  
March 21  March Book Discussion, 10 a.m.  
March 21  Central West Discussion Unit, 12:45 p.m.  
March 25  March Book Discussion, 10 a.m.  
March 27  Program/Advocacy Committee Meeting, 6 p.m.  
March 29  Intro to LWVDC Governance, 6:30 p.m.  

2023 Elections

Apr. 4  Spring Election

Candidates’ Answers, our League’s voter guide, and Vote411.org, the national League’s voter website, which gives address-specific information, will be available online in mid-March. Both have spring election information and candidate responses to League questions. The print edition will be on CapTimes racks and an insert in the Wisconsin State Journal and the Capital City Hues on March 15. Be an informed voter!

The League in the News

The Oregon Observer featured the League’s February Forum about the Wisconsin Supreme Court race.

WORT radio and the Sun Prairie Star promoted the League’s Candidates’ Answers for the primary election.