



Bulletin

League of Women Voters® of Dane County, Inc.

2712 Marshall Court, Suite 2, Madison, WI 53705-2282 • 608.232.9447

office@lwvdanecounty.org • www.lwvdanecounty.org

Office hours: Monday–Thursday, 9–1

April 2018

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President's Message

Looking for a Few Good Workers

Our League operates on volunteer power.

We know we need to do a better job of harnessing the enthusiasm and talents of our members to allow us to have a greater impact. As is often the case in volunteer organizations, those doing all the work are working too hard to recruit and train others to help. This model is untenable.

As the Nominating Committee builds a board to serve the organization for 2018-2019, I am looking for a member (or members) with great organizational and interpersonal skills to serve as an appointed board member and **volunteer coordinator**. This person would work closely with other board members and help to connect members to appropriate activities based on their indicated preferences. This is a terrific opportunity to meet more members and learn more about how League works. If you are even a little curious about this, please contact me!

Last month I announced that our office administrator, Elaine Sinagra, will retire in mid-April, after helping prepare us for our move to our new office at 4513 Vernon Boulevard. Our personnel committee is creating a position description, and we will soon begin our search. We hope we can count on our members to assist us in finding the right person. **Office administrator** is a challenging position in general, and we have expected our administrators to accomplish a lot in 16 hours a week, with unpredictable interruptions from members and the public.

As we transition to a new office and administrator, we are revamping many of our procedures, using technology to simplify some processes and decentralize others. We want to be nimble in our responses to members, donors and events. And we hope to put more information directly into the hands of board members and project coordinators so they can do their work. Greater use of more internet-based collaborative tools should also make it easier for volunteers to assist with some regular tasks.

If you are interested in being a volunteer coordinator, please let me know. If you or someone you know would be a stellar office administrator, please email personnel@lwvdanecounty.org or contact me, and watch the weekly member updates for details on the position listing.

Thank you for all you do for League!

Brook Soltvedt, soltvedtbrook@gmail.com, 608-274-5184

Labor Rights, the March Issues Forum

Mike Casey, bulletin@lwvdanecounty.org

The March 7th Issues Forum focused on how unions and workers are faring in Wisconsin. With a turnout of more than 80 members and guests, the discussion around the impacts of Act 10, adopted in 2011, and worker-employer issues across the board was extensive.



John Wedge, WEAC Region 6 executive director

John Wedge, Region 6 Executive Director of the Wisconsin Education Associations Council and a member of the National Education Association and the AFL-CIO, said Act 10 has accomplished several things its supporters wanted and has changed the landscape in ways that both its supporters and critics may not have realized as we look at how both have addressed those impacts.

Wedge noted that supporters of 2011 Act 10 said it was needed primarily to reduce the cost of government to address the financial situation in which the state and local governments found themselves at the time. Act 10 accomplished this goal by requiring most public employees to contribute 5.8% of the cost of their employers' pension contributions and 12.6% of the cost of their health insurance premiums as well as limiting or prohibiting the extent to which employers should/could negotiate with unions. He pointed out that the impacts of Act 10

went well beyond the immediate argument by (a) changing the way in which many thought about public sector workers, including educators, (b) reducing the number of union members and the power of unions themselves, and (c) "stagnating" educators' compensation relative to their counterparts across the nation.

Wedge outlined ways that employees can still work with school boards to impact the school climate. Some communities, such as the Oregon school district, made a statement about the high value they place on education by approving higher tax levies than the previous rules would have allowed. Other communities have adopted changes that have left educators feeling unsupported, with few opportunities or incentives to pursue professional development. These communities have seen teachers fleeing the profession. Act 10 has made school board elections more important than ever.

Becky Shigiel, Executive Director of Worker Justice Wisconsin, said inadequate wages, discrimination and harassment have been made worse by the lack of information on workers' rights and the expansion of the temporary economy. Low-wage workers in food service, agriculture and residential and long-term health care are most at risk. At least half of all low-wage workers are not paid according to state or federal laws regarding overtime, their job classification or other rules required of employers. Yet this wage theft goes largely unpunished. Robberies of all sorts cost victims approximately \$139 million in 2012; in the same year, workers experienced an estimated loss of \$280 million from wage theft and no one went to jail for it. The Worker Justice Center can help. The public can also help hold employers accountable by asking the owners of our favorite restaurant how much those in the back of the house (the cooks, prep workers, bussers and dishwashers) are paid.



Becky Shigiel, Worker Justice Center

Shigiel noted that most of the workers who find themselves in need of the services of the Worker Justice Center are immigrants, who are vulnerable to abuse by employers. Even though two-thirds of the Latinx population in Wisconsin were born in the United States, many are assumed to be undocumented. The Latinx population in Dane County has tripled over the past 15 years and has become indispensable to the economy of Dane County. Yet more than 70% earn \$10 an hour or less, well below Wisconsin's stated living wage of \$17.50 per hour and even farther below the \$24.57 per hour wage that a 2018 M.I.T. analysis showed was required to support an adult and one child in Wisconsin.

If you missed the presentation or want to share it or review it, you can [watch a video here](#). Download or stream [our audio podcast](#) if you prefer.

Remembering John Koch and Lynn Schten

John Koch died on March 1, after a brief struggle with cancer. He was a league member and the devoted spouse and partner of Mary Anglim, our membership director. John was loved for his compassion, grace, wit, humor and untiring support of progressive political causes. He distinguished himself in his career as a librarian at UW–Madison. He gave generously of his time, leadership, and expertise to community organizations including the Emerson-East Neighborhood Association, PLATO, Emerson Elementary School, Hawthorne Public Library, and the James Reeb Unitarian Universalist Congregation. He wrote many letters on behalf of political prisoners through Amnesty International and was a long-time supporter of Save the Children. He worked for many years as a Madison Election Official, where he was respected for his kindness and his expertise.

Marilyn (Lynn) Murdock Schten died on March 18. She was a 50-year (life) member of the League, having joined in 1963. A native New Englander and a teacher by training, Lynn spent most of her adult life in Madison. She traveled widely and for long periods of time, embracing new cultures. Lynn loved art and visiting art museums and served as a docent at the Chazen Museum at UW–Museum. Lynn was an active member of the Oakwood and Queen of Peace Communities and St. Thomas Aquinas Church. She is survived by her husband Ed and their three children.

A memorial service for Lynn Schten will be held at 11 a.m. at the Oakwood Village University Woods Resurrection Chapel, 6201 Mineral Point Road, on Saturday, April 21, 2018. Visitation will begin at 10 a.m.

We Appreciate Your Donations of Time and Money!

These members helped with mailings and preparing forum supplies in March. Thank you for your time!

Gail Bliss
Judi Dilks
Eileen Hanneman
Pam Hennessey
Jesse Kehres
Pat Kippert
Joyce Knutson
Merilyn Kupferberg
Barbara Mortensen
Edith Sullivan
Jan Van Vleck

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

General Donations

Anonymous
Dave Nelson
Brook Soltvedt
Barbara Wolfe

Valentine Gifts

Sue Larson
Sylvia Poppelbaum
Claire Rider
Sue Salter
Deborah Speckmann
Sandra Vandervest

Candidates' Answers

These donations were matched by an anonymous member!

Christine Clements
Barbara Crabb
Lynn Gilchrist
Kirk Malnor
Diane Mayerfield

If you find something interesting in the *Bulletin*, [share this link](#) with a friend!

New Members!

We welcome these new members who joined us in 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.

Pamela Alsum
Michael Bellecourt
Carole Blenker
Linda Dietrich
Wendy Hathaway

Jean Jacobson
William Kelly
Allison Martinson
Louise Robbins
Peggy Smelser

Vicki Tobias
Barbara Wolfe
Deana M. Zentner

Annual Meetings for LWVDC and LWVWI

Please save the evening of **May 22** to attend the LWV Dane County annual meeting. We'll enjoy appetizers, desserts and friends, hear from local student leaders of the March for Our Lives in Madison, meet our newest 50-year members, thank retiring board members and conduct our business meeting.

As part of our business meeting, we record the names of those who plan to attend the state league annual meeting, which will be **June 8–9** in Oshkosh. The LWVWI Board of Directors agreed once again to suspend the bylaws on eligibility to allow any LWVWI member attending the 2018 Annual Meeting to be a voting delegate. The idea supports one member, one vote and is in the category of ongoing experimentation and innovation to be welcoming and extend our reach.

Please consider attending the state meeting, especially if you are a new member. LWVWI is working on an itinerary that will appeal to all levels of engagement and experience with the League.

[Registration is open now.](#)



Unit Meetings

Unit Coordinator, Diane Martin Liebert, dwliebert@gmail.com, 608-698-4143

League members typically meet 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.

Third Monday West/Middleton, April 16, 6 p.m.

Gardd Parc Community Room

6767 Frank L. Wright Ave., Middleton

Priscilla Thain, 233-5578, priscillathain@gmail.com

Barbara Mortensen, 233-7563, barbaramort@charter.net

Third Tuesday Oakwood West, April 17, 12:45 p.m.

B39 The Oaks, 6205 Mineral Point Rd., Madison

Park on grounds or in P1 Heritage Oaks Ramp

Nancy Simonsen, 230-3014, njsimonsen@gmail.com

Kathy Johnson, 238-1785, kjohnson44@ameritech.net

Third Wednesday Northeast Side, April 18, 3:30 p.m.

Lakeview Public Library

2845 N. Sherman Ave., Madison

Dorothy Wheeler, 244-4711, dorothywheeler@tds.net

Third Wednesday Downtown Dinner, April 18, 5:15 p.m.

Capitol Lakes private dining room

333 West Main St., Madison; Free parking in ramp

Ingrid Rothe, 556-3174, irothe@ssc.wisc.edu

March Unit Report

Thirty members and six guests participated in March's discussion units on labor rights.

Everyone who participated in the discussion was surprised by the wage disparity in Wisconsin. One group was surprised that Minnesota registered worse than Wisconsin in the employment racial disparity category.

There were several responses to question #2 about the government role regarding labor unions. It was generally decided that the government should, at least, stay neutral or non-interfering.

As for the 3rd question regarding a possible role for the federal and/or state governments in this issue, is for them to ensure employee and environmental safety (maybe via training) and that living wages should be paid.

Wednesday, April 11, 2018, 7 p.m.

Fair Voting Maps

Gill v. Whitford, the Wisconsin gerrymander case,
how it began, developed, and its current status

William C. Whitford, Professor Emeritus, UW Law School

Capitol Lakes, 333 West Main St., Madison
(Free parking in the ramp across the street)

Upcoming Events

- April 11 LWVDC Board Meeting, 2:30 p.m.
April 11 [Issues forum on fair voting maps and redistricting](#),
7 p.m. (Capitol Lakes)
April 13 Office closes for the move
April 23 Office reopens at our new location
([4513 Vernon Blvd.](#), Suite 106)
May 9 LWVDC Board Meeting, 2:30 p.m.
May 22 [Annual Meeting](#), 5:30 p.m. (Capitol Lakes)
May 31 [High School Voter Education Committee](#), 2 p.m.
(Sequoia Library)
Jun 8–9 [State League Annual Meeting](#)

Officers

- President**
Brook Soltvedt
Vice President
Ingrid Rothe
Secretary
Gail Bliss
Treasurer
Diane Liebert
Office Administrator
Elaine Sinagra
Bulletin Editor
Mike Casey

*Watch your email each Monday for a weekly update from LWV Dane County
with a roundup of action alerts and upcoming events.*

2018 Elections

August 14 Fall primary
November 6 Fall election

Empowering Voters. Defending Democracy.