

LWV[®] Bulletin

April 2024

League of Women Voters of Dane County

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Highlights of This Issue

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Lively Issues Luncheon: April 13

Tickets available through April 3 only, so act today! [Purchase tickets here.](#)

This year's luncheon will be held at the Overture Center for the Arts in downtown Madison, with speaker **Jennifer Uphoff Gray**, artistic director of [Forward Theater Co.](#)

Following the luncheon, enjoy a performance of Forward Theater's production of ***What the Constitution Means to Me***, written by Heidi Schreck and directed by Uphoff Gray. The play provides a new look into what it means to be an American. As a teen, Schreck won scholarships for college by participating in Constitutional debate competitions. Now, she cannot help but weigh the earnest study, idealism, and hopeful wisdom of her youth against the complexities of being a citizen and a woman in the United States in the 21st century. Join Wisconsin favorite Colleen Madden as she steps into Schreck's shoes to ask us what this living document means to us—and what it means to be an American.



President's Message

Barbara Feeney, president@lwvdanecounty.org

Dear Friends in League,

Around the time you read this, our Spring Update will arrive at your home, in your mailbox. I hope you enjoy the stories about how we are reaching out to bring potential voters into the democracy arena, wherever we meet them. You will also see a listing of those who contributed financially to the LWVDC in 2023. Like many small nonprofits, most of our support comes from individual supporters who have a deep commitment to our mission. We are so grateful for these

champions who make our work possible.

In this issue of the *Bulletin*, you will see the list of members who have agreed to be on the ballot for the Board elections coming up at our Annual Meeting on May 28. I think you will be excited to see the list of new, emerging leaders who will take us forward. They have already been serving as volunteers and leaders, but you may not have heard of them. Like many of you, they have been serving quietly, keeping the balls in the air. Our thanks go to Nominating Chair Chris Clements and the members of the committee —Lisa Hassenstaub, Mary Ellen Schmit, Beth Fultz, and Amber Rottier—who have worked so diligently to bring this slate of candidates forward.

For nearly two years I have had the privilege of representing the League as its president. During that time, I have heard so many people express thanks for what the League of Women Voters does for democracy. They speak with deep respect for the expertise of our volunteers and the quality of the programming and information we offer. Of course it is you—our members, donors, and volunteers—who make it all possible.

I look forward to celebrating the past year's successes at the Lively Issues Luncheon on April 13 and at the Annual Meeting on May 28. At these two events we take a pause in the busy League schedule to meet, to celebrate, and to get ready for the next steps, wherever they take us. Hope to see you there!

Save the Date!

LWVDC Annual Meeting 2024

Tuesday, May 28, 2024

Capitol Lakes

333 W. Main Street

Madison, WI

Social Time 5:30 PM

Business Meeting 6:00 PM

Watch for a mailing with details to arrive in April!

Nurture Civic Engagement With Our NEW Interactive Tabling Materials

Sadie Dempsey, smdempsey@wisc.edu

As the Civic Engagement & Community Partners Fellow, I have been working with League members to come up with new ways of connecting with the people of Dane County to make politics interesting, relevant, and accessible. To that end, I developed a series of interactive tabling materials that we piloted this March. There are two new tools available for check-out for any League members to use.

First, is **the wheel of democracy**. We developed a trivia game, where community members can spin a tabletop prize wheel and answer questions about voting rights history, local political representation, or any number of categories. Rather than focusing on whether participants already know the “right” answer, League members can work with participants to teach them how to look up important political information, providing them with the skills they need to be active, informed citizens.

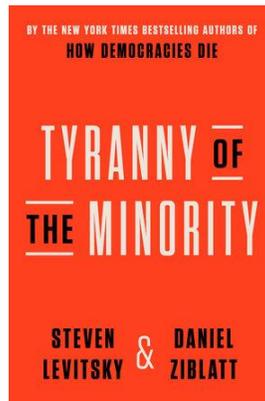
Second, is our **issues poster**. Community members can come up to the poster and “vote” for the issue that matters most to them. This allows League members to practice “deep listening” by giving participants space to share how an issue impacts their day-to-day lives, asking thoughtful questions, and connecting over shared values. Normally the League provides information to the community; this is an opportunity to flip the script and allow the community to teach us about what matters to them. By staying curious and really listening, we can build deeper relationships with the people around us.

We invite you to familiarize yourself with these interactive tabling materials in the office and check them out to use while you’re tabling out in the community. You’ll notice that the interactive tabling materials come with a new set of stickers, bookmarks, and buttons designed to be small tokens of appreciation for community members who participate.

Please contact me at smdempsey@wisc.edu with any questions, to request training on how to use the materials, or to suggest new issues, trivia categories, or games. To check out the interactive tabling materials, please email Kerry one week in advance at office@lwvdanecounty.org.



Participants in a workshop about the new tools.



Book Discussion Recap: *Tyranny of the Minority* by Steven Levitsky and Daniel Ziblatt

Kelly Haslam, KellyLHaslam@gmail.com

In February, League members discussed *Tyranny of the Minority* by Steven Levitsky and Daniel Ziblatt.

This excellent book from two Harvard professors of government is about the U.S. government and the ingredients necessary for it to function as a true and multiracial democracy. Its relevancy could not be more acute as we head toward another major election and see the counter-majoritarian impacts of our government in real time.

Levitsky and Ziblatt describe three things politicians committed to democracy possess: they respect the outcome of free and fair elections; they unambiguously reject violence as a means to

reach political goals; and they break away from antidemocratic forces. The authors also emphasized the danger of constitutional hardball, where actions might align with the law but undermine its intent. They outlined four ways this occurs: exploiting legal gaps, excessive or undue use of the law, selective enforcement, and lawfare (crafting new laws to target the opposition). Levitsky and Ziblatt also forewarn about how recent autocracies were often built using constitutional hardball.

The book dissects several aspects of our electoral system and political institutions and lays bare all the ways our government is falling short of democracy. The authors illustrate the numerous ways that counter-majoritarian (minority) rule is happening through the Electoral College, elections for the U.S. Senate, the filibuster rule in the U.S. Senate, the U.S. Supreme Court, and other areas. Levitsky and Ziblatt do a stellar job of putting these issues in a historical context with examples not only from the United States but around the world. Learning about how other countries have made improvements to their constitutions and governments was very eye-opening and highlighted how behind the United States has been with contemporary reforms of its own.

The book ends with several suggestions to help move the United States toward an authentic democracy. Their suggested reforms fell into three categories: upholding the right to vote, ensuring that election outcomes reflect majority preferences, and empowering governing majorities. In addition, the authors point out the often tireless yet vital work of political movements to move toward these goals.

I highly recommend this book. It is readable, highly informative, and extraordinarily enlightening. I think few will not learn something new by reading this book, nor feel a sense of urgency to improve our democracy.

If you are interested in joining a future planned book discussion or simply want more information, please email books@lwvdanecounty.org.

Did You Know? You Can Donate Stock to the League!

This is a good time to consider donation of appreciated stock to the League of Women Voters. The market's resurgence allows stock owners to donate shares directly to a charity such as LWVDC and thereby earn a charitable deduction without paying capital gains tax. Of course, each person's circumstances are different and anyone considering donation of appreciated stock may want to consult their financial advisor.

Questions? Contact fund.development@lwvdanecounty.org.

Discussion Units

Aileen Nettleton, Discussion Unit Coordinator

The Discussion Units are taking a break until fall. See you then!

2024-2025 LWVDC Leadership Slate

The 2024-2025 LWVDC leadership slate will be voted on at the Annual Meeting of May 28. Here's more information about the nominees.

President – Sue Jennik (2024-2026)

I have been active with the League since 2019 and currently serve as Program Director. I am also the chair of the LWVWI Legislative Committee. In 2018, I retired from my work as a labor lawyer representing unions and workers in the New York City area. Having grown up in Milwaukee, I am happy to be back in Wisconsin near my family. Volunteering with the League brings me joy by helping to protect our democracy with so many committed activists.

Vice President Governance – Gordon Ridley (2024-2026)

I joined LWVDC in 2022 and have served on the Finance and Fundraising Committees. Following a career in health care administration, I have served on nonprofit boards in Madison and tutor for the MMSD.

Vice President Operations – Patti Schubert (2024-2025)

After 20+ enjoyable years as a Technical Solutions Consultant/Sales Person, I am excited to return to an early and on-going joy and passion. Thank you for the possible opportunity to focus on civic engagement & education and connections & collaboration for a stronger democracy via LWVDC. I look forward to helping any way I can.

Secretary – Mary Strait (2024-2026)

I'm a retired civil engineer—I worked at the DOT as a highway designer and as an airport program manager. Since 2016, I've chaired and co-chaired a social justice group at my church, focusing on voter and immigrant justice. In this role, I track legislation and send action item

suggestions to an email list of about 90 people, and organize and lead educational/advocacy events. I've participated in LWV voter registration events the past 5 years or so. I'm also a poll worker in Fitchburg.

I'm late to the party on this stuff—I tended to stay away from political action; I hardly even kept up on the news. The events of January 2011 woke me up to the truth that our elected officials don't always work in their constituents' best interest.

I recently went on a civil rights trip to Alabama. This trip highlighted the enormous sacrifices made by civil rights leaders in the '50s and '60s, and how important it is that we honor them by reinstating the voting rights lost since then.

Treasurer – Kathy Annen (2024-2026)

In 2016, I retired from a nonpartisan legislative service agency with over 40 years of employment. During that time, I was responsible for various aspects of the administrative, technical and financial functions of the agency, including as Finance Officer for the last 12 years. I am a member of the Judicial Integrity Working Group. I grew up on a small Wisconsin dairy farm that has been in the family since 1850. I enjoy many pastimes, especially reading, walking and spending time with my children and grandchildren.

Director Programs – Marti Stamper (2024-2026)

As a licensed psychologist in private practice, I value how the LWV gives me a chance to practice what I encourage my clients to do: speak up, pursue passions and values as well as foster supportive community relationships. In the years since I joined the LWV in 2001, I have enjoyed the camaraderie of the intelligent, knowledgeable, passionate women I have met through the League and have learned from their leadership and guidance. In a suburban League in Illinois (near Chicago), I served as Secretary and Publicity positions and helped organize many LWV programs and studies before serving as that (much smaller) League's President. When I moved to Wisconsin, I started in the advocacy committee here in Dane County, and began helping out with the program committee before accepting this nomination. I am looking forward to a new year of learning and defending democracy.

Director At Large – Amanda Hingst (2024-2026)

I have worked in communication at Epic for the past 16 years with a focus on medical billing, quite a change from my previous career as a historian of medieval Europe. I enjoy learning, and in the past few years I've earned certificates in nonprofit management and AI prompt engineering. I began my involvement in the LWVDC with the Program Committee in the summer of 2022 and I've been the editor of the monthly *Bulletin* since January 2023.

Director At Large – Gail Krc (2024-2025)

I worked for the State of Wisconsin for 42 years as a program evaluator at the Department of Public Instruction and at the Wisconsin Department of Health until I retired in 2010. After I retired, I was a Special Registration Deputy and worked as poll worker for the City of Middleton, which I continue to do. These activities let me see how important and rewarding it is to help people exercise their right to vote. I joined the LWVDC in August 2013. Currently I am the LWVDC's senior liaison for Middleton and coordinate the LWVDC's municipal clerk project. I am also the LWVDC's liaison for the WayForward Resources (formerly MOM) food pantry in Middleton where I volunteer each week and was a member of the LWVDC's Voter Service Steering Committee. One of the nicest things about being retired is that you have time to do the things you like to do but couldn't before. For me, that includes volunteer work, reading, traveling, being with our grandchildren, and enjoying walks in the neighborhood and state parks.

Nominating Committee Chair – Barb Feeney

I served as the Director of Voter Service for one year and then was elected President in 2022 for a two year term. In the last three years, I have learned about the depth of the talent and commitment of our members. I have also learned how the League of Women Voters is held in high esteem in the community as a trusted source for information on issues and voting. In a previous life, I was a member of the League of Women Voters of Door County, where I cut my teeth on real-life policy issues, and learned how powerful a group of citizens can be when they persist in the cause of democracy. I would be honored to be elected Chair of the Nominating Committee to help LWVDC carry on its proud legacy of the last 103 years.

Nominating Committee Member – Margaret Fuguitt

I joined the league after my retirement in 2017. (I spent over 30 years teaching elementary students.) I continue to enjoy working as a substitute teacher. Since joining the League I've served on the Membership Committee. In 2019 I helped with researching materials for celebrating our League's centennial. As a result, I've been privileged to conduct interviews with the 50-year members of our League for the last few years. I'm very interested in the rich history of our organization.

Nominating Committee Member – Lisa Hassenstab

I live in southwest Madison with my spouse and 10-year-old kiddo, and my day job is working as a Public Policy Manager for Disability Rights Wisconsin. My work background primarily consists of policy and advocacy work with health and human services and early care and education

nonprofit organizations. I'm a knitter, reader, runner (sometimes), hockey/baseball/football mom, and I am proud to serve as an election official/chief inspector for the City of Madison.

There is a lot going on with LWVDC these days!

Want to stay on top of the most current happenings?

Look for our weekly Enews in your email every Tuesday,
or [subscribe here](#) if you don't receive it.

League News & Updates

Contributions

General Donations

Robin Chapman
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Todd Micholic
Patricia Watson

Sustaining Donations

Joseph King
Zachary Levin

New Members

We welcome these new members who joined us recently. An [updated member directory](#) is available on our website.

Do you want to join the League? [Sign up for a membership online](#)

Susanne Anderson
Karen Boegler
Jay Bonnell
Sanee Bonnell
Kimberley Darby
Nancy Didion
Andrea Diss-Torrance
Marcia Getto
Valerie Gibbons
Terry Gnezda
Sarah Humphries
Emily Johnson

Karen Julesberg
Joseph King
Patricia King
Kiley Komro
Kathryn Lake
Mary Beth Marklein
Emma McAleavy
Lissa Mclaughlin
Todd Micholic
Kayhleen Roberg
Maria Zeien

Upcoming Events

April 13: Lively Issues Luncheon
May 28: Annual Meeting

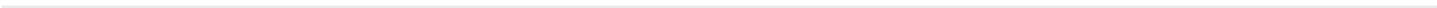
Check out [the calendar](#) for more upcoming events.

League in the News

Sue Jennik, LWVDC Program Director, appeared on [WORT's Labor Radio on March 22](#) and on [WORT's A Public Affair on March 19](#) to discuss the two proposed constitutional amendments on the April ballot and why the League is advocating for a no vote.

[League of Women Voters urges 'no' vote on ballot initiatives](#), Cambridge News and Deerfield Independent, March 13, 2024

[On to April elections: Who's in, who's out after Dane County primary](#), The Cap Times, February 22, 2024



Executive Committee

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Sue Jennik, Program Director

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