



Bulletin

League of Women Voters® of Dane County, Inc.

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Office hours: Monday–Thursday, 9–1

November 2017

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President's Message

Sustainability has been on my mind.

Our November forum, *Sustainability, a Framework of Support for Present and Future Generations*, educates us about efforts in Dane County to establish and achieve goals of sustainability. Achieving these goals seems like an existential challenge, as our nation copes with the effects of more frequent and devastating natural disasters, and changes at the state level threaten long-standing protections to our water supply, wetlands, and undeveloped lands.

But the title of this forum weighs on my mind as it relates to our organization. We need a framework of support for present and future generations to keep LWVDC sustainable. The League's work is people-

powered, and as I look to the future, achieving our goals of increasing access to the ballot, having fair voting maps, and engaging our citizens in informed participation in our democracy, I see the need for new leadership. After three years as president or co-president, I will be stepping down in June. After two years as co-president and three years as vice president, Ingrid Rothe will also be stepping down. Others on our board will also be ready to move on after serving their term or terms.

So, I ask you to consider whether you might be willing to serve on the Board of Directors next year. If serving solo in a position seems too daunting, maybe you'd be willing to share a position. Or maybe you know someone who would be a great board candidate and can encourage her or him to serve. Now is the time to begin thinking about it, asking questions. Our Nominating Committee, chaired by Karen Gunderson, will begin its search in earnest in January. But the earlier people step forward, the more time there is to prepare for a successful transition.

Leaders have sustained LWVDC for 97 years. Please consider bringing your skills and talents to lead us toward our centennial year. Thank you!

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

Please notify our office if your name, mailing address, or email address changes. It will save us postal charges and ensure you are kept informed about League activities. Thank you!

Crisis in Wisconsin's K-12 Education Funding

Carol Carstensen, carolcarstensen@gmail.com

The October issues forum focused on various aspects of state policies and funding for K-12 schools. More than 60 League members and visitors gathered at Capitol Lakes to hear a panel of three experts provide important information on the status of public education in Wisconsin.

Jeff Pertl, Senior Policy Advisor at DPI (Department of Public Instruction), described the major demographic changes and funding changes over the last decade. While Wisconsin's student population became poorer and more diverse, the state 2011-13 budget delivered a massive cut in allowable spending. Half the districts in the state were able to pass referenda; this has created great disparities across the state in what districts can provide for their students.

Julie Mead, Professor of Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis, UW–Madison, emphasized that public education is public in purpose, funding, access, accountability, and curriculum. Vouchers – public funds for private schools – began in Wisconsin in 1990 and have grown to include over 33,000 students, costing the state \$247 million. She emphasized that charter schools are different in that they are public schools – mostly run by local school districts in Wisconsin. Research on vouchers over the past 10 years has shown no consistent impact on student performance compared to comparable students in public schools.

Heather DuBois Bourenane, Executive Director of [Wisconsin Public Education Network \(WPEN\)](#), explained that WPEN provides information, coordination, and connections for grassroots groups throughout the state that support public education ([local groups affiliated with WPEN can be found here](#)). WPEN members were visible and vocal at the budget hearings this past spring; they kept the legislature's Budget Committee aware of the importance of supporting more funds for public schools. WPEN advocates for fair funding, local control, including local educational leaders in decision-making, policies that help kids, and a moratorium on voucher expansion.

If you missed the forum, you can watch a video recording, listen to a podcast, view slide presentations and more when you [visit the forum page on our website](#).

Thoughts on the Dane County Jail

Mary Anglim, mtanglim@gmail.com

On September 20, four members of our League toured the Dane County jail, led by Lt. Kurt Pierce of the Sheriff's Department. On this afternoon, 793 people were confined in the jail, a somewhat higher number than the average 755. We were impressed with the professionalism and concern for inmates that Lt. Pierce showed, but daunted by the scope of changes needed to provide more effective treatment to our fellow citizens.

The current space for over 200 higher-security inmates in the City-County Building (CCB), built in the 1950s, is clearly dreary, comfortless, and unsafe. These and other inmates under discipline or who request single cells may find themselves in solitary confinement ("restrictive housing") here in small locked cells with little visual stimulation or



Members Kelly Danner, Mary Anglim, and Julia Gilden, with Lt. Kurt Pierce. Not shown is photographer and member Kathy Fullin.

proper ventilation. Inmates not in solitary confinement have individual cells with access to only a small, bare day room shared with several other prisoners. The linear layout prevents any relationship building or positive interactions between officers and incarcerated individuals. Officers do not have the capacity to observe cells via video, so there are intervals where cells are not monitored. When cells do not unlock properly, the unlocking procedure is time-consuming and could be life threatening.

In the “new” (25-year-old) Public Safety Building (PSB), about 500 medium-security prisoners are kept in large “pods” of up to 50 individuals. Inmates can read, watch television, socialize, or rest, but the opportunities to work on skills needed for re-entry to the community are limited by the very small programming space available. Prisoners who arrive intoxicated, who are suicidal, or in need of medical or mental health monitoring, or who request isolation may be kept restrictive housing in the PSB. As is well-known, African-Americans make up more than 40% of the total jail population.

Lt. Pierce stressed the need for more and improved programming space. For instance, while the classroom used by 17-year-old inmates (considered adults under current WI law) is decorated with cheerful and colorful pictures and slogans, it is incredibly cramped, and there is a constant loud whoosh from the ventilation system. A large cement recreation space includes a basketball court and some exercise equipment,

but inmates get a turn there only about once per week (once per month for inmates of the CCB). Lt. Pierce suggests that the community should watch to see whether forthcoming jail plans include adequate space for counseling, medical care, education, and recreation.

A consultant, Mead & Hunt, has recommended building new floors onto the Public Safety Building to replace the CCB cells, at a cost of about \$76 million for the first phase. (For County taxpayers, that will amount to \$6 million per year for 20 years.) The remodel would close the jail space in the CCB and provide about 944 beds in the PSB. An optional Phase 2 Plan to make more space would cost another \$24 million. The Dane County Public Protection and Judiciary Committee (PP&J) recommended approval of Phase 1 of the Plan, including space for in-person visitation and robust plans for diversion from jail for any inmates who have the necessary support to do well in the community. County Executive [Joe Parisi has included Phase 1 in his 2018 budget.](#) Other parts of the Executive budget set aside modest monies for re-entry programs and better-coordinated community-based services for people with mental health issues.

You can [contact your County Supervisor](#) to share your views. A public hearing on the Dane County budget was held on October 18. Supervisors can submit amendments through November 3, and County Board deliberations begin November 20.

Stay in the Know

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

Do you follow state politics? You may be interested in these resources.

Wisconsin Legislative System Notification Service

The [Wisconsin Legislature](#) has a [website](#) that you may want to become familiar with. If you want to be alerted to legislative activity on a certain bill or a certain topic, you can sign up for their [Notification Service](#).

Eye on Lobbying

This [website from the Wisconsin Ethics Commission](#) allows you to find out what lobbying interests have registered in favor or against legislation. You can search a piece of legislation, or you can search for a



lobbying group. If you are wondering whether LWV Wisconsin has registered for or against specific legislation, you can [find out here](#). You can search over present or historical legislative sessions.

Wisconsin Eye

[Wisconsin Eye](#) is the local version of CSPAN. They are a 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to bringing state politics to the people (and worthy of your support). Most of us can't attend legislative hearings and press conferences. Wisconsin Eye brings them to you. You can sign up for various communications and updates. Their "[Morning Minute](#)" is just that—a daily email with a link to a one-minute video with highlights of an event or events the previous day. Watch it while you wait for the coffee to brew!



The Wheeler Report

[The Wheeler Report](#) is a news service that covers Wisconsin politics, including the Wisconsin legislature, budget process, governor, court action, state agencies, and more. [You can subscribe to the report here](#). Their website links press releases about business, the economy, education, and Wisconsin's U.S. legislators. If there is Wisconsin political news, it is usually posted here first.

Fall Voter Outreach a Success

Betty Cohen,
bettycohen3@gmail.com

We have completed our fall voter outreach effort at the Society of St. Vincent de Paul (SVDP) food pantry in Madison. LWVDC volunteers staffed the tables, in pairs or individually, during 15 morning or afternoon shifts over a 4-week period. With the assistance of our team of 15 volunteers, 8 voters completed their registration online and 9 voters received and/or completed paper forms to submit to clerks with proof of residence. Another 53 individuals received information about voter registration, voter ID, or elections in general.

Our next outreach at SVDP will be in January. Watch for details and signup information in December. For more information about volunteering at SVDP, contact me at bettycohen3@gmail.com.

Legal Assistance for Victims of Elder Abuse

Wisconsin Legal Action and Wisconsin Judicare now offer statewide legal assistance for seniors regarding civil legal matters related to elder abuse (e.g., restraining orders, powers of attorney, evictions, stolen money or property, domestic or other mistreatment). Some income guidelines apply, but there are exceptions, so don't hesitate to inquire. If you or someone you know is a victim of elder abuse, contact the [Elder Rights Project](#) at 844-614-5468, or nmz@legalaction.org.

ACA Open Enrollment Nov. 1 – Dec. 15

If you are too young for Medicare and have health insurance through the Affordable Care Act (aka Obamacare), or if you have family or friends who have or qualify for this coverage, be aware that the open enrollment for 2018 is much shorter than in past years, and that the system will be down for extended periods on Sundays. Please help those who need this coverage to enroll as soon as possible. The Navigators at [Covering Wisconsin](#) can help. In Dane County, call 608-251-1455.

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

The Clock Is Ticking . . .

Mary Anglim, Membership Chair,
membership@lwvdanecounty.org

Please renew your membership for 2017–2018 by **October 30th** to remain on the state and national rosters and in our member directory.

The Dane County League offers you grassroots action opportunities and thoughtful, non-partisan information about voter education and outreach and many local government issues. I urge you to stay (or become) active with us.

The regular membership of \$75.00 is tax-deductible and includes \$32 for your membership in LWV US, and \$31 for membership in the LWV WI. Household, Student, and Scholarship rates are available. To renew online, or to print the membership form, click the [Join/Renew](#) button on our website. Thanks!

Welcome, New Members!

Joining us in September were:

Susan Bruckman	Yogesh Chawla
Leslie DeMuth	Janet L. Kelly
Jodi Vander Molen	Theresa Walske

Thanks for Helping in September!

Thanks to the many members who contributed food, drink, or supplies to our September Open House gathering.

From stuffing envelopes to organizing name tags and other supplies for forums, our office volunteers help us serve you. These members assisted in September. If you'd like to help, email office@lwvdanecounty.org.

Janine Edwards
Eileen Hanneman
Jesse Kehres
Brook Soltvedt
Janet Van Vleck

Financial contributions beyond membership dues keep our work going! Thank you to these members who donated in September!

Debra L. Cronmiller
Claire R. Dick
Hatheway M. Hasler
Georgia J. Kaftan
Sue and Terry Larson
Elizabeth C. Magnuson
Karen M. Michael
Mildred E. Moffett
Ellen M. Rosborough
Carol T. Toussaint

Mental Health Services Action Alert

County Executive Joe Parisi designated \$100,000 in his budget proposal for 2018 for a study of mental health services in Dane County, which would include how a Mental Health Crisis Restoration Facility could be operated in partnership with health care providers and community organizations. After our April 2017 Issues Forum on [Jailing the Mentally Ill](#), our League has advocated for such a facility. We [testified before county board committees](#) and [wrote County Executive Parisi](#) to urge action to address gaps in our community-based services for mentally ill persons and establish a restoration center.

Please [contact your county board supervisor](#) to urge approval of this initiative in the 2018 Dane County budget. See our [website](#) for more information.



Ode to a Friend, Annrita Lardy

Hatheway Hasler

On October 8, 2017, Madison friends, civic and family, gathered on Madison's lakeshore to honor the life of Annrita Lardy, whose 95 years on this earth had ended.

A happy life well lived it was! I am sure that Annrita ranked her marriage to Henry Lardy the joy of her life. Their many friends were quite aware that being together enhanced everything they did. They were unusually active — dancing, biking, playing tennis, canoeing, horse riding, and most importantly raising a close family. Henry earned the greatest honors in his field, celebrated nationally with Annrita at his side.

Annrita joined a Madison group of women, many of whom started their volunteer lives with the League of Women Voters. The League launched many of them into public life — actively interested and participating in governance. Some went on to elected office; others volunteered mightily. Annrita became a leader serving at the state level for six years as Legislative Chair of the League. Governor Lucey appointed her to the first Wisconsin State Ethics Board.

At the local level Annrita was President of the Visiting Nurse Service and the Attic Angel Foundation. Special energy went to pre-school education in South Madison. Until well into her nineties Annrita took an interest in local and world affairs, planning for monthly programs at Attic Angel Prairie Point. She was proud to be a League of Women Voters 50-year member (for 23 years!).

Unit Meetings

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

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.

About 30 members attended September unit meetings, discussing Understanding Rural Dane County. Most thought AB109, as amended, was not consistent with League positions, and that the county "has a broader understanding of the impacts of zoning decisions than the individual towns." [LWVWI opposed the bill.] While Tony Evers's Fair Funding for the Future proposal might provide relief to rural school districts, members thought it unlikely to pass in the current legislature. Urban privilege (including many public services) comes at a cost (higher taxes). Public libraries, by providing access to computers, the internet, and other intellectual property and services, are indispensable to both urban and rural residents.

Third Monday West/Middleton

November 20, 6:00 pm

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

November 21, 12:45 pm

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

November 15, 3:30 pm

Lakeview Public Library

2845 N. Sherman Ave., Madison

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

Third Wednesday Downtown Dinner

November 15, 5:15 pm

Capitol Lakes Retirement Center private dining room

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

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

Wednesday, November 1, 2017

7:00–8:30 pm

**Sustainability: A Framework of Support for
Present and Future Generations**

Lisa MacKinnon, Dane County Sustainability and Program Evaluation
Coordinator

Spencer Schumacher, Middleton Sustainability Committee Chairperson

Erica Kluetmeier, Fitchburg Sustainability Specialist

The Capitol Lakes Grand Hall, 333 West Main St., Madison

(Free parking in the ramp across the street)

Upcoming Events

- Oct. 24 **Access to Justice**, public hearing on judicial recusal,
6:30 pm (Capitol Lakes)
- Oct. 25 GRUMPS conversation with MMSD Superintendent
Jen Cheatham, 11:30 am (Christ Presbyterian Church)
- Oct. 28 **LWV WI Issues Briefing** (MATC Truax), 8:30 am
- Oct. 28 Retirement party for LWVWI Executive Director
Andrea Kaminski, 3:00–5:00 pm (Karben4 Brewing)
- Nov. 01 Issues Forum, 7:00 pm (Capitol Lakes)
**Sustainability: A Framework of Support for Present
and Future Generations**
- Nov. 02 **High School Voter Education Committee**, 2:00 pm
(Sequoia Library)
- Nov. 06 **Voter Education Ambassador Training**, 5:00 pm
- Nov. 07 Impact of Voter ID on Election Turnout, 7:00 pm
- Nov. 08 LWVDC Board Meeting, 2:30 pm
- Dec. 13 LWVDC Board Meeting, 2:30 pm

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.*

Encouraging informed and active participation in government since 1920.