



Bulletin

League of Women Voters® of Dane County, Inc.

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Office hours: Monday–Thursday, 9–1

September 2017

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President's Message

Welcome to a new League year! I hope you will join us September 6th at 6 pm for our annual open house before our first forum of the year. It will be an excellent opportunity to get to know new members and catch up with old friends.

Many newer members may not realize that our League began as the League of Women Voters of Madison. Stoughton had its own League in 1924, and Middleton had its own League from 1958–1971. The Middleton League merged with the Madison League to become the Dane County League in 1971. Nosing around in the *Bulletin* archives, I was surprised to see that in the 1960s we had 18 units, many in towns and cities outside Madison.

Today, most of our members (>270) have Madison mailing addresses. Middleton (at 36) and Fitchburg (at 14) have sizeable numbers, 10 other communities have 1–5 members each.

When Kathy Cramer spoke at our annual meeting in 2016, she reminded us that many Wisconsinites outside Madison and Milwaukee feel their interests and concerns are ignored. The program committee thought it would be a good exercise for our members to learn more about Dane County communities beyond Madison. We begin in September with *Understanding Rural Dane County*, an attempt to understand governing relationships and funding structures in towns, villages, townships, and their school districts. Our October forum will provide a view into state funding of public schools and voucher schools, and how school districts in Dane County can advocate for strong public schools. Finally, in November, we will look at Dane County's successes in achieving sustainability, focusing on Fitchburg and Middleton.

Many of our members do not attend a unit meeting or monthly forum, so we have been looking for other ways to engage our members in the issues we care about. I propose that to follow up on our September forum on *Understanding Dane County*, members read (or re-read) Kathy Cramer's book, *The Politics of Resentment: Rural Consciousness and the Rise of Scott Walker*. If you are interested in meeting to discuss the book informally with other League members, please email me. Let me know your general availability for a meeting, and if you need help getting a copy of the book. Once I gauge the interest, I will schedule a group or groups.

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!

Step Up in September

Mary Anglim, membership@lwvdanecounty.org, 608.249.0031

Did you forget to Reply in July? Did you neglect to Act in August? Fall is a great time to get active in the League of Women Voters! Renew your membership for 2017–2018 at lwvdanecounty.org/join-full-year, pay with a credit card, and submit your member interest form on-line, **or** print the form and mail it our office with your check.

If you hesitate because you are not sure the League is right for you, I'd love to hear more. Please contact me. There are many needs for citizen education and action, and there is a place for you in the League.

Fall Voter Outreach Opportunity

Betty Cohen, bettycohen3@gmail.com

Our voter outreach table will be set up in the St. Vincent de Paul food pantry waiting room from September 18th through October 13th.

Volunteers can sign up for 2-hour shifts—Mondays, Tuesdays, or Fridays, 10:30 am—12:30 pm or Thursdays 2:30 pm—4:30 pm. Orientation sessions for new volunteers are on Wednesday and Thursday, September 13 and 14 from 10:00 am—11:30 am. Please contact me to learn more or to add your name to the SVdP outreach mailing list.

Proposed Action Team on the Administration of Justice

Mary Anglim, mtanglim@gmail.com, 608.249.0031

For several years I have been following the discussion in Dane County and the City of Madison on racial disparities in our criminal justice system, proposals for a new jail, studies of the Madison Police Department, and related topics. Currently, I am a member of the City of Madison Public Safety Review Committee. At a coffee for new League members last March, several people indicated interest in learning more about mass incarceration or other justice topics. This fall, both the County and the cities in Dane County will make decisions on spending on the Dane County Jail, the Sheriff's Department and city police departments, including Madison, as well as on social services that affect crime victims and offenders.

To help members follow the discussion and form their opinions, I propose to make available current information about time, place, and agenda of relevant government committees, for example:

- Criminal Justice Council (Dane County)
- Public Protection and Judiciary Committee (Dane County)
- Ad Hoc Committee on Madison Police Department Policies and Procedures (Madison)
- Public Safety Review Committee (Madison)
- Various budget hearings on justice-related topics

This information is available on city and county websites, but is not always easy to find. I will post it on a team list serve for a League Action Team on Administration of Justice. While the subject matter partly overlaps the work of the existing Action Team on Mental Health, I think that there are enough issues to keep both Teams busy.

I will also work with Dane County Jail personnel to schedule a tour of the jail for any League members who are interested. From there, we can see what actions engaged members would like to take, and how these actions integrate with League positions and values. I don't foresee regular meetings of the Action Team, but members might want to have occasional get-togethers.

To hear more about this Team, sign up on our website using the **Take Action** button and checking **Administration of Justice**. Send questions and suggestions to me at mtanglim@gmail.com.

The Integrity of Wisconsin Voter Lists

Brook Soltvedt, soltvedtbrook@gmail.com, 608.274.5184

The controversy over the President's Election Integrity Commission and its request that states provide detailed information about voters may have piqued your curiosity about the steps Wisconsin takes to keep its voter rolls accurate.

Many of our members know how voters get *into* the WisVote database. But how does Wisconsin deactivate the records of voters who die, move away, or become ineligible to vote because they are adjudicated as felons or mentally incompetent? The Wisconsin Election Commission (WEC, the authority that replaced the Government Accountability Board or GAB) receives regular reports from the Department of Health Services (DHS) about people who die in Wisconsin. These lists are checked against the WisVote database and matches are flagged for the local clerk to deactivate. Likewise, the Department of Corrections provides regular reports about citizens who are adjudicated as felons and have not completed their sentence (incarceration, parole, and probation). Voters who change their address within Wisconsin have their existing record updated. Other states provide notification that former Wisconsin residents have registered to vote in their state, whenever the voter provides a prior Wisconsin address on their new registration.

In addition, every two years, in the spring following each federal election (after all clerks have entered their voting data from the fall election), WEC sends a return postcard to every registered Wisconsin voter who has not voted in the last four years. If the voter does not return the postcard, affirming the desire to remain an active voter, or if a postcard is returned as undeliverable, the voter record is deactivated in the database.

The WEC has just completed its 2016 list maintenance. Here are a few statistics: They mailed 381,495 postcards statewide, which resulted in 351,733 voters having their status

changed to inactive. Zeroing in on our area, 42,599 notices were sent to Dane County voters, including 26,614 City of Madison voters. WEC deactivated 40,899 Dane County voters, of which 26,129 were from the City of Madison.

But wait—there's more! As part of this year's move to online voter registration, Wisconsin joined a consortium of states (now at 20 plus the District of Columbia) belonging to ERIC, the Electronic Registration Information Center. Funded largely by the Pew Trust and fees from member states, ERIC uses sophisticated encryption methods to securely compare voter registration data from member states to postal change-of-address information, Social Security death records, and to each other. By matching voter records to *national* death records (not just Wisconsin DHS records) and US postal records, and using more sophisticated data matching software to detect potential duplicate records, ERIC can help Wisconsin do even more to maintain accurate voter lists.

In September, WEC will begin developing the technology required to import ERIC death and duplicate matches into WisVote, flagging them for clerks to process appropriately (deactivate as deceased, or merge duplicate records). The project should be completed by the end of 2017. Because ERIC provides monthly reports, Wisconsin will have the option to perform maintenance on an ongoing basis. Presumably, this will reduce the number of voters in WisVote who have not voted in the last four years, simplifying the list maintenance performed after federal elections.

For more information, read the Wisconsin Election Commission's statement on election integrity (<http://elections.wi.gov/elections-voting/integrity>) and their report on voter list maintenance (<http://elections.wi.gov/node/5174>), and visit ERIC's website (<http://www.ericstates.org/>).

Encouraging informed and active participation in government

Your League has been encouraging informed and active participation in government since 1920 in a variety of ways—providing voter outreach and assistance in the act of voting itself, offering forums, seminars, and research materials on a broad range of topics, and developing policy positions on matters of importance in our community.

Our policy positions fall into five categories:

- 1) Government Responsibilities and Procedures
- 2) Administration of Justice
- 3) Social Policy
- 4) Natural Resources
- 5) School Districts

Whatever the issue, government policy and programs must meet these criteria.

- Competent personnel with clear responsibilities
- Coordination among agencies and levels of government
- Adequate financing
- Effective enforcement
- Well-defined channels for citizen input and review

Although some of our positions were developed in the 1970s and 80s, they remain effective for addressing issues facing our elected leaders and fellow citizens today. We will use a portion of future *Bulletins* to bring you information on what we are doing through our unit meetings, forums, and other activities in hopes that you will take an interest in helping us address issues of utmost importance to you and your neighbors.

Watch this space!

Contributions

Our League retains only \$12 of our members' annual membership fee of \$75 after we pay dues to the state (\$31) and national (\$32) Leagues. Additional contributions from members, nonmembers, and small grants allow us to do our work. The following people contributed to our League (beyond membership dues) during July. Thank you to all our generous donors. We couldn't do it without you!

General Donations

Margaret M. Amlie
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Julia Weiser

Memorials

In memory of Fran Bicknell
Kathryn and Doug Johnson
Sally and Ed Gleason

Firearms Training in Schools

from an LWVWI action alert

On August 3, 2017, the state League registered its opposition to AB 427, requiring the DPI to create a firearms training curriculum at a time when funds for the fundamental responsibilities of public education are seriously inadequate. Their statement was simple and clear:

The League of Women Voters of Wisconsin registers in opposition to Assembly Bill 427 which would require the State Superintendent of Public Instruction to develop a curriculum for an elective firearm education course for high school students. While school districts would not be mandated to offer such a course, resources (financial and employee time) of the DPI would be required at a time when financial constraints on the fundamental responsibilities of public education are seriously inadequate.

Please contact your Assembly representative to register your own concerns. Please share your concerns with friends or relatives in other parts of the state and encourage them to speak to their Assembly Representative as well.

Learn more about the bill at: <https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/2017/proposals/ab427>.

Find out how to contact your legislator (and much, much more!) at: <https://legis.wisconsin.gov/>.

Check our website for current action alerts from national, state, and our own League. And get the Voices call to action app for your phone.

Unit Meetings

Unit Coordinator, Diane Martin Liebert, dwliefert@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. The discussion concludes with recommendations for further study or action. Please let the host know that you plan to attend.

Third Monday West/Middleton – 6:00 pm

Gardd Parc Community Room
6767 Frank L. Wright Ave., Middleton
Barbara Mortensen, 233-7563,
barbaramort@charter.net
Priscilla Thain, 233-5578, priscillathain@gmail.com

Third Tuesday Oakwood West – 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

Third Wednesday Northeast Side – 3:30 pm

Lakeview Public Library, 2845 N. Sherman Ave., Madison Dorothy Wheeler, 244-4711, dorothywheeler@tds.net

Third Wednesday Downtown Dinner – 5:15 pm

Capitol Lakes Retirement Center Restaurant "The Seasons" 333 West Main St., Madison; Free parking in ramp Ingrid Rothe, 556-3174, irothe@ssc.wisc.edu

Like us on Facebook and follow us on Twitter (@LWVDaneCounty)!

New Members

We look forward to working with those who have joined in July, bringing our total membership to more than 350.

Welcome!

Carol Jensen

Susan Schueneman

Wednesday, September 6, 2017

Please introduce a friend to our League!

Open house with pizza and potluck snacks – 6:00 p.m.

Program with our speakers – 7:00 p.m.

Understanding Rural Dane County

Nikki Jones, Dane County Board Supervisor, District 28

Barb Feeney, Oregon School District Board of Education

Mark Hazelbaker, Attorney representing Dane County Towns Association

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

(Free parking in the ramp across the street)

Upcoming Events

Sept. 06 Open House, 6:00 pm (Capitol Lakes)

Sept. 06 Issues Forum, 7:00 pm (Capitol Lakes)

Understanding Rural Dane County

Sept. 13 LWVDC Board Meeting, 2:30 pm

Sept. 21 High School Voter Education Committee,
6:00 pm (Sequoia Library)

Oct. 04 Issues Forum, 7:00 pm (Capitol Lakes)

The Crisis in Wisconsin K12 Education Funding

Oct. 11 LWVDC Board Meeting, 2:30 pm

Nov. 01 Issues Forum, 7:00 pm (Capitol Lakes)

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Encouraging informed and active participation in government since 1920.