



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

Summer 2017

President's Message	1
New Officers and Directors	2
Understanding League Culture	3
High School Voter Education	
Action Team	4
Highlights of the LWVWI Annual	
Meeting	4
Lessons Learned	6
Thank You, Volunteers!	6
New Members	6
Contributions	7
Remembrances	8
Fall Voter Outreach	
Opportunity	8
Election Integrity Commission	9
Highway Cleanup Project	9
Unit Meetings	9
Upcoming Events	10
Officers	10

President's Message

Defining and Redefining League

A telephone (attached to the wall), a stack of papers or a notebook, a pencil, and a plate of treats with tea. Or, a smart phone, a Google hangout, drinks, and a contest. Dressing up and dancing. Or getting down to serious business. It's all about culture.

The Dane County League is lucky to have both 26 life members (50 years or more in the League) and more than 80 new members last year. Many of the other 250 or so members have varying degrees of experience with League.

New members sometimes find it hard to learn the League "way." Elsewhere in this *Bulletin* (p. 3), I write a bit more about the ways of the League. I have been active for 10 years and I'm still not sure I'm doing it right. However we get to it, assuring nonpartisanship, fairness, and action based on study and consensus, is how the League maintains its reputation for integrity and earns the trust of our community.

The national League leadership is working hard to transform the organization by 2020, our 100th anniversary. They understand that

if the League is to retain its importance into the next hundred years, we will need to make changes to our culture. Debra Cronmiller, President of the Wisconsin League, is a member of the strategic planning team at the national level. The 3.5 minute video [A Transformational Journey](#) provides a good overview of the work being done. This image from LWV CEO Wylecia Wiggs Harris's presentation [Growing the League in Engagement and Power](#), shows some of those aspects of culture that have both helped us to "make democracy work" and also need to be re-examined for a new age.

Cultural change is often painful and can be alienating. If we do it right, it will be a positive transformation. This online *Bulletin* is one of those cultural changes. Online, the *Bulletin* can be longer, more current, filled with color, images, and links to additional information. It costs us nothing to print or mail. But not all

WHAT IS CULTURE?

"the way things are
done around here"



members have a laptop as a fifth appendage, as I do! Many are not comfortable reading online. And such a cultural change could mean our members read less of the *Bulletin* and lose interest in participating. Yet we may fail to engage new members if we stay with a black-and-white paper *Bulletin* no longer than 6 pages, with no images, that must be written almost a month in advance to allow time to produce it. And so we begin our cultural transformation.

I welcome feedback and questions from members and have created a special email address for comments about these changes: **Bulletin@lwvdanecounty.org**

Brook Soltvedt

New Officers and Directors

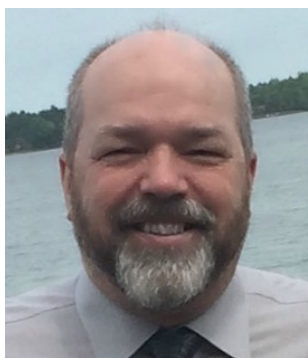
The Board of Directors of the League of Women Voters of Dane County has 12 members: the President, the Vice-President, the Secretary, the Treasurer and six Directors who are elected at the Annual Meeting as well as two (Assistant Treasurer and Webmaster) who are appointed by the Board.

The Board manages League affairs and funds in accordance with the League's Constitution and By-Laws. Two new Directors and the President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer took office on July 1, 2017.

New Directors



Cathy Berndt has been a member of the League of Women Voters of Dane County since 2013. She joined the League after serving as an election observer for the 2012 presidential election, which introduced her to the League's wide-ranging efforts to engage voters in the election process through its non-partisan voter information activities, including the preparation and dissemination of *Candidates' Answers* and its *Issues Forums*. Equally vital, she says, are the League's efforts to assist individuals in registering to vote and obtaining any necessary identification to vote, particularly as access to voting has repeatedly been impacted by changes in the law over the last several years.



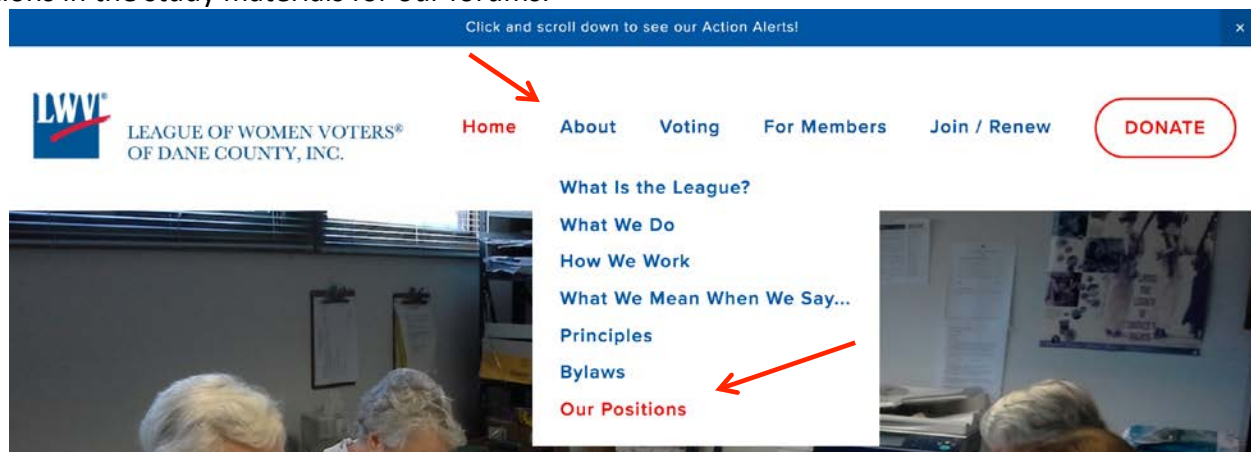
Paul Lindquist joined the League of Women Voters of Dane County in 2014. He took a leadership role in the Dane County Voter ID Coalition when it was formed after seeing the growing challenges citizens faced in exercising their franchise. He has assisted in voter-registration events, in-person absentee voting and Election-Day poll activities. He says he has been very impressed by the passion, dedication and intelligence in League members he has met and looks forward to helping to continue the amazing work the League undertakes. In 2016, Paul retired after a thirty-five-year career in information technology. He is now a technology assistant at the Waunakee Intermediate School, where his wife, Cindy, is a teacher.

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!

Understanding League Culture

Brook Soltvedt, soltvedtbrook@gmail.com 608.274.5184

Although the League is nonpartisan in all our activities and we never support or endorse candidates, we *do* take positions on issues—after careful study and after reaching consensus. Existing positions can also be reviewed and updated. Positions taken at the local level must be consistent with those adopted at the national and state level. Every League member is encouraged to become familiar with our positions, particularly in areas where you have a specific interest. You can [find links to our positions at each level](#) on our website. Get to them anytime by going to the **About** menu from the home page and choosing **Our Positions**. Our programs and actions must be supported by positions. This is why we include League positions in the study materials for our forums.



The three levels of the League organization can also be confusing. Only a local League can initiate study and action regarding local and county government policies and practices. So, our League devotes considerable resources to understanding local government processes and advocating for change. LWV Wisconsin monitors state legislation and advocates for issues at the state level, and LWV US lobbies at the national level. Our League shares action alerts for state and national issues and we use state and national positions to support our work. We encourage all members to subscribe to and read communications from state and national and to be familiar with the resources on their websites. Individual members should engage at whatever level of government their interests lie, in line with League positions. Also understand that membership in a local League includes membership in the state and national organizations. Joining the national League directly does *not* make you a member of your state or local League.

The “unit meeting” can be a cultural mystery to newcomers. The unit meeting is where members digest and discuss the information shared at our issues forums, and where they can recommend future action on a topic. Before the internet and when many women did not have full-time careers, the unit meeting was an opportunity to meet with other intelligent and engaged women to study issues of importance to them and plan actions to create change. For some, unit meetings were a lifeline during child-rearing years. Today, only a small fraction of our members participates regularly in a unit. Members of either gender are unlikely to host meetings in their homes. Work and family commitments as well as concerns of the aging can make it challenging to find a convenient time and place to meet. This part of League culture seems ready for

LWVUS
National issues

LWVWI
State government

LWV Dane County
County and municipal
government; school districts

transformation. If you are interested in a unit meeting but find the current schedule (p. 9) does not meet your needs, feel free to organize one at a time and place convenient to you. You could even arrange a unit that meets using a [Google Hangout](#). A unit should have at least five members who can commit to attending most of the six meetings held each year.

People learn in different ways. Some of you may enjoy a new podcast created by two LWVUS volunteers. It's called *What Would Alice Paul Do?* Stream it from their [website](#), or find it on iTunes and Stitcher. It's another way to learn about League culture.



High School Voter Education Action Team

Susan Fulks, Team Leader, susanfulks@sbcglobal.net, 608.238.8057

The High School Voter Education Action Team met three times this spring/summer to address two major project goals: (1) assist eligible high school students in registering to vote and (2) help students become informed Wisconsin voters.

Team members have been trained in voter registration policies and procedures and have researched materials used with high school students by other LWV chapters. A registration program was continued at West High School that encouraged students to use MyVote.wi.gov to register for the April 2017 election. Team members interviewed several Dane County school administrators and teachers to identify potential registration activities as well as staff and student groups with which to partner.



Inspire US (www.inspire-usa.org), a non-profit organization which assists high schools in planning and conducting peer-to-peer registration activities, is expanding into Wisconsin in fall 2017. Our committee members will be working closely with interested Dane County high schools as they implement this program.

The next High School Voter Education Action Team meetings are scheduled for Thursday, August 24 (11 a.m.–1:00 p.m.) and Thursday, September 21 (6:00–8:00 p.m.) at the Sequoya Library. Interested LWVDC members are always invited to attend.

Highlights of the LWVWI Annual Meeting

Brook Soltvedt, soltvedtbrook@gmail.com 608.274.5184

This year's state League annual meeting, held in Green Bay, was attended by eleven Dane County League members, not including LWVWI President, **Debra Cronmiller**, and LWVWI staff, **Andrea Kaminski**, **Erin Grunze**, and **Alexandra Graff**, who belong to our League. **Mary Anglim**, **Janine Edwards**, **Kathy Fullin**, **Helen Horn**, **Paul Lindquist**, **Consuelo Lopez-Springfield**, **Ralph Peterson**, **Melanie Ramey**, **Ellen Rosborough**, **Ingrid Rothe**, and **Brook Soltvedt** attended. The theme was Safeguarding Democracy: Civility, Equity & Community.

Friday's keynote speaker **Harvey J. Kaye**, UWGB history professor, spoke on the radical ideals of "the founders" from Thomas Paine to FDR, the subject of Kaye's forthcoming book. Kaye urged us to recognize and embrace that radicalism as we chart a course today.

Three small groups then discussed either poverty studies underway or planned by various Leagues, membership development and outreach strategies, or updates from the two Inter-League-Organizations,

including a chance to see the watershed game. **Consuelo Lopez-Springfield**, a member of the state League board, observed parts of each discussion and reported highlights before the entire body on Saturday.

Saturday began with the Zabelle Malkasian Lecture presented by **Erica Nelson** from the Wisconsin Council on Children and Families (now renamed Kids Forward). Nelson, Director of the [Race to Equity project](#), presented the shocking information about Wisconsin's (and Dane County's) extraordinary racial disparities in education, employment, income, housing, and incarceration rates that many of us saw when she and **Lawrence Torrey Winn** presented the original report at our [local forum in September, 2014](#). She emphasized the need to examine all policy recommendations through the lens of racial equity.

In the **Parade of Leagues**, local Leagues were allotted three minutes to speed-report a summary of their activities over the past year. LWVDC Co-President **Brook Soltvedt** used her three minutes to describe the City of Madison's program of declaring public libraries and city offices extensions of the Clerk's office, and our partnership in registering voters and assisting with in-person absentee voting. Some members of the Appleton League expressed serious interest in this program and said they thought it was the best thing they learned at the whole conference.



Ingrid Rothe, LWVDC Vice President, was honored with the **Meg McLane Award for Advocacy**, recognizing her decades of work with League, from marital property reform in the '80s to founding and leading the Dane County Voter ID Coalition in the present. We are so proud of Ingrid's accomplishments!

State staff reported on the success of the Gear Up to Vote campaign, the creation of several new local Leagues in Wisconsin, and an overall increase in membership this year, to just under 1500. Members expressed appreciation to Executive Director **Andrea Kaminski** for her terrific work representing the League at the state capitol—work being recognized by Community Shares of Wisconsin, which selected [Kaminski to receive the Linda Sundberg Civil Rights Defender Award](#).

A [minimum wage study](#) proposed by LWVDC was unanimously adopted. **Ingrid Rothe** will chair the study, and members of five other local Leagues agreed to serve on the study committee. Because so many resources are readily available and Rothe had a distinguished professional career in research on poverty, the cost of the study should be minimal, and the time frame is likely to be short. Two other programs, advocacy on voting rights and education and advocacy on poverty, were also approved.

As usual, one of the best features of the meeting was the opportunity to meet Leaguers from other parts of Wisconsin and to share ideas, concerns, and solutions. We encourage all members, whether brand new to League or a life

member, to attend the state League meetings—the annual meeting each June, and the Issues Briefing in October. If you have questions about attending one of these events, or are looking for a “buddy” to go with, call or email the office.

Lessons Learned

Consider carefully the language we use. We could be sending the wrong message! At the state annual meeting we were reminded:

- 🔥 **We support fair voting maps** (redistricting is a process whose outcome may be fair or unfair)
- 🔥 **We support getting money *out of* politics** (not money *in* politics)
- 🔥 **We are working *to block* a constitutional convention** (we aren’t working *on* a constitutional convention)

Words matter. Let’s try to be clear about where we stand.

Thank You, Volunteers!

Our League would not be able to do all that it does without many hours from our volunteers. We’d like to thank the following office volunteers.

Diane Adams
Mary Bean
Gail Bliss
Mary Conroy
Judi Dilks
Joann Elder
Eileen Hanneman
Reta Harring
Pamela Hennessey
Carol Hermann
Jesse Kehres
Pat Kippert
Merilyn Kupferberg
Pat Levin
Joan Lundin
Claire McArdle
Myrna McNatt
Kate Mulligan
Joan Provencher
Edith Sullivan
Geri Torti

New Members

Our League has more members than at any time in the past fifteen years, reflecting, we believe, the level of interest in public policy issues in the county, state and nation and the opportunities we bring to those who are interested in “making democracy work.” We look forward to working with those who have joined in the past twelve months, including the following who joined in March through June 30th of this year.

Welcome!

Michelle Baker	Karyn Knaak
Caitlin Brecklin	Benedita Mello
Kelly Danner	Erin M. Nawrocki
Heather Driscoll	Frank F. Nick, Jr.
Patricia Eaton	Melissa Scholz
Susan Hollingsworth	Deborah Umstead
Lydie Hudson	Heidi Wagner
Leah K. Johnson	Sarah Yanke

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) from 3/2/17–6/30/17. Thank you to all our generous donors. We couldn't do it without you!

Valentines

Sally H. Carpenter
Robin S. Chapman
Betty Cohen
Mary P. Conroy
W. Emy Gartzke
Marcia Griskavich
Ellen Hadidian
Elizabeth A. Jensen
Rita J. Kades
Lois A. Kiggins
Sue Ann Larson
Elizabeth A. Moore
Aileen Nettleton
Margaret O'Donoghue
Claire M. Rider
Rose C. Sime
Brook Chase Soltvedt
Edith T. Sullivan
Janet M. Van Vleck

Candidates' Answers

Laura Dettinger
Ilse Hecht
Kaitlyn Price

General or Other Donations

Anonymous
Beverly C. Davison
Lynn Gilchrist
Michael Kane
Kirk Mainor
Karen McKim
Ingrid E. Rothe
Sarah Sawyer
Brook Chase Soltvedt
Margaret E. Stine

May Challenge

Anonymous
Mary T. Anglim
Janice M. Baldwin
Catherine F. Berndt
Sybil R. Better
Michael Briggs
Harriette Burkhalter
Joan K. Burns
Carol Carstensen
Mary P. Conroy
Robin P. Downs
Barbara Feeney
Mary Anne Fulton
Sally T. Gleason
Lucy A. Gibson
Peggy A. Glassford
Karen P. Goebel
Reta F. Harring
Helen Horn
Shirley S. Inhorn
Rita J. Kades
Andrea Kaminiski
Janet Kane
Jesse W. Kehres
Patricia A. Kippert
Merilyn Kupferberg
Sue Ann Larson
Patricia A. Levin
Virginia J. Link
Marle S. McCabe
Kathryn L. Mulligan
Aileen Nettleton
Anne Slaughter Perrote
Karen E. Peterson
Mary K. Ploeser
Ingrid E. Rothe
Lynn A. Rusch

Mary H. Rutter
Gail B. Shea
Kathleen A. Shurts
Brook Soltvedt
Edith Sullivan
Caryl E. Terrell
Priscilla G. Thain
Robert W. Topel
Sandra A. Vandervest
Dorothy C. Wheeler
Phyllis L. Young

Memorials

In memory of Jim Cain
Cheryl Furstace Daniels

In memory of Fran Bicknell
Patricia A. Kippert
Karen Pope

In memory of Ann Nelson
Judith E. Symon Hanson
Shirley S. Inhorn
Linda Sandler
Beth Schermer

Bequest

Estate of Jim Cain

Remembrances

Yvonne Vitense passed away on March 31. She was honored as a 50-year life member of the League in 2015. In an interview later that year, Yvonne said, “it seems to me that I probably wouldn’t be able to vote had it not been for the League of Women Voters and the ladies who worked on suffrage even before the League was created . . . I’m grateful to the League for working on voting rights (for women as well as others).” She also noted that she was very proud of *Candidates’ Answers*. “It’s fantastic to be able to read the opinions of the candidates without any interpretations by third parties.”

Fran Bicknell, who received the first Carrie Chapman Catt award when our League instituted that honor in 2005, passed away on April 24. 2005 was the same year she was honored as a 50-year life member of the league. She had a long list of substantive League accomplishments over six decades:

- Advocated for fair housing in Madison, where an ordinance passed in 1963 five years before the federal Act
- Served as Bulletin editor in 1962–1963
- Helped write the 1997 study on long-term care and was principal author of the 2004 study
- Served on the Children and Families Committee during the 2000s, developing information the league used to testify on behalf of community services in the county budget.

Ann Nelson, who was also honored in 2005 as a 50-year life member of the League, passed away on April 30. Ann joined the League immediately after moving to Madison in 1955. She served where needed, not seeking recognition. She was on the Board in the 1960’s, served on the Reading Committee in the 1980’s, and on the Long-Range Planning Committee in the 1990’s.

From time to time Ann served as a League employee. In her obituary, Ann’s family suggested that memorial donations in her honor could be made to the Dane County League. Along with Fran, she was an active member of the Oakwood unit, and her contributions will be missed.

Fall Voter Outreach Opportunity

Betty Cohen, bettycohen3@gmail.com

Volunteers are welcome to participate in our fall voter outreach drive at St. Vincent de Paul food pantry to help clients obtain Wisconsin voter IDs, register to vote or update their registrations. Our outreach table will be set up in the waiting room of the Fish Hatchery Road SVdP food pantry from September 18th through October 13th. Volunteers can sign up for 2-hour shifts—Monday, Tuesday, or Friday mornings, or Thursday afternoons. We plan to have two volunteers for each shift, and we’re planning orientation sessions at SVdP for new volunteers. Please contact me to learn more or to add your name to the SVdP outreach mailing list.

Election Integrity Commission

from an LWVWI action alert

On July 19th, the Presidential Advisory Commission on Election Integrity held its first meeting, with Co-Chair Kris Kobach later calling into question the results of the 2016 popular election. The League believes such claims, made without evidence to back them up, are a threat to our democracy. This [statement](#) from LWV US President Chris Carson notes that the commission appears to be laying the groundwork to recommend more restrictive voting laws. LWV WI's executive director, Andrea Kaminski, is quoted in this [article by Wisconsin Radio Network](#). Listen to an interview with Andrea and an opposing view on Wisconsin Public Radio's [Joy Cardin Show](#). In an earlier memo, LWV WI [urged](#) Wisconsin election officials to provide the commission with only that voter information which is public and to charge the same rate they would charge anyone for a data request.

[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.

Highway Cleanup Project

League members do more than assist citizens in registering to vote, track and speak to issues that come before local and state officials, or provide community forums on matters of interest to citizens across the state. On May 15th, eight League members spent a beautiful Monday morning removing trash in our assigned area along US Highway 14 just west of Middleton.

In three hours, 20 large trash bags were filled, about half of them with recyclables, largely plastic bottles and aluminum cans. Working in pairs, there was lots of time to share stories while beautifying the roadside. The members contributing their time were **Cathy Berndt, Gail Bliss, Joyce Knutson, Lyn Mussallem, Brook Soltvedt, Caryl Terrell, Jan Van Vleck** and project coordinator **Doug Johnson**.

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. 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

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

Wednesday, September 6, 2017

Open house with 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 Wisconsin Towns Association

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

(Free parking in the ramp across the street)

Upcoming Events

- Aug. 09 LWVDC Board Meeting, 2:30 pm
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
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)
[Getting to Sustainability](#)

Officers

President

Brook Soltvedt

Vice President

Ingrid Rothe

Secretary

Gail Bliss

Treasurer

Diane Liebert

Office Administrator

Elaine Sinagra

Bulletin Editor

Mike Casey

Encouraging informed and active participation in government since 1920.