



# Bulletin

## League of Women Voters® of Dane County, Inc.

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Office hours: Monday–Thursday, 9–1

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## 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.

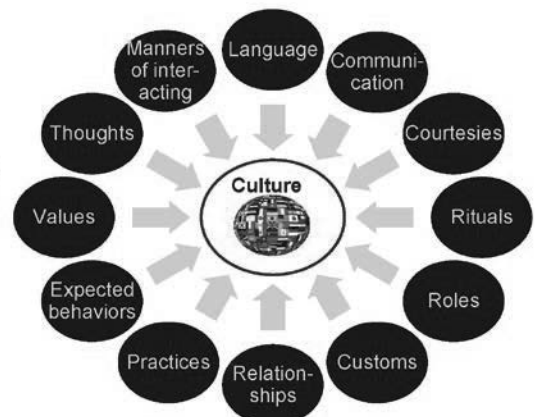
The national League leadership is working hard to transform the organization by 2020, our 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary. They understand that

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

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## 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.



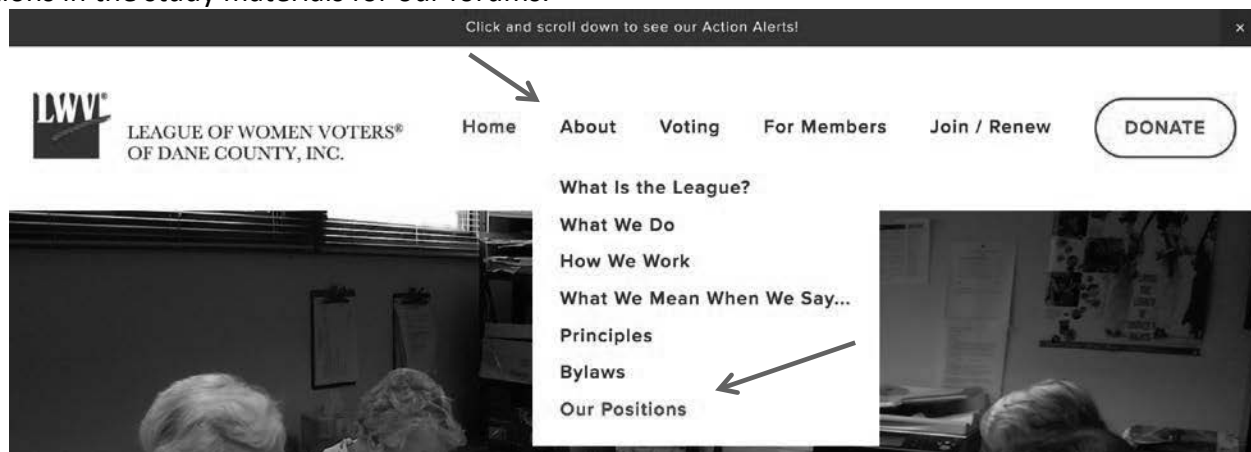
**Paul Lindquist** joined the League of Women Voters of Dane County in 2014. He took a leadership role in the Dane County Voter ID Coalition when it was formed after seeing the growing challenges citizens faced in exercising their franchise. He has assisted in voter-registration events, in-person absentee 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](mailto: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](mailto: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](http://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](http://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](mailto: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 Torry 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 30<sup>th</sup> of this year.

## Welcome!

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

# 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.

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## Fall Voter Outreach Opportunity

Betty Cohen, [bettycohen3@gmail.com](mailto: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 18<sup>th</sup> through October 13<sup>th</sup>. 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 19<sup>th</sup>, 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.

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[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.

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## 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 15<sup>th</sup>, 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**.

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## Unit Meetings

*Unit Coordinator, Diane Martin Liebert, [dwliebert@gmail.com](mailto: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](mailto:barbaramort@charter.net)  
Priscilla Thain, 233-5578, [priscillathain@gmail.com](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto: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.*