



Bulletin

The League of Women Voters of Dane County, Inc.

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Dec. 2008 / Jan. 2009

Executive Committee:

President – Pam Rewey

Pres-Elect – Donna Norton

Secretary – Janet Kane

Treasurer – Pat Levin

Editor – Brook Soltvedt

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Office Hours:

MWF: 9:00 AM–12:00 PM

TR: 9:00 AM–12:30 PM

Office Administrator:

Sara Markham

President’s Message

Pam Rewey

Your Board would like to see everyone at the “Annual Lively Issues and Forum” on Saturday, January 17. The speaker will be State Senator Lena Taylor and the topic will be “Predatory Lending.” Senator Taylor represents Milwaukee and part of two suburbs. She understands this topic well, as predatory lending affects so many of her constituents. We look forward to hearing from Senator Taylor at lunch at the Arboretum Visitor Center.

Thank you to all volunteers during the fall elections. Whether you registered voters at our numerous sites, moderated a candidate forum, helped at the City Clerk’s office, served as a poll worker or as a part of a Quality Assurance team, you made a difference. Dane County had no serious problems with elections in part due to the League’s help. We hope that first-time voters remain involved in the spring election.

Speaking of spring, we are already looking at questions to ask candidates for *Candidates’ Answers*. The primary will be in February with deadlines in January. The spring election is in April, but the *Isthmus* deadline is in March. The candidates don’t have to register until early January, but the League has to be ready.

We have much to do this spring. Relax and enjoy the holidays. There is work ahead.

Lively Issues Luncheon

Saturday, January 17, 2009

11 AM Arrival and social gathering

11:30 AM Luncheon

12 PM Program: **Predatory Lending**

Lena Taylor

State Senator, 4th District

UW Arboretum Visitor Center

McCaffrey Drive, Madison

Recent Board Highlights

Janet Kane, kanefam@tds.net, 831-1845

- **Treasurer Pat Levin** explained the budget process. Up to 50% of our recent budgets have relied on former contributions of members. In the short term we can use money market funds to pay expenses, but we need to increase revenues.
 - **Levin** is working with Madison Computer Works to purchase a new office computer system, including support, as approved by the membership at the 2008 Annual Meeting. The Board approved a budget of \$1400, funded in part by a \$500 gift from the children of former LWVDC member **Marie Reger** in her honor, and a \$100 gift from the Madison Institute.
 - **Fred Wade, Fundraising** director, shared his draft application for a \$10,000 grant from the Evjue Foundation to help with voter education expenses, including *Candidates' Answers*. **Levin** will assist with grant submission.
 - **Wade** suggested an appeal to the broader community in December, asking for financial support of the League's non-partisan efforts in educating voters and encouraging voter participation. **Priscilla Thain** will compile a list of people and organizations that requested League services this election season.
 - **Teague Harvey, Membership** director, reported that about 70% of members had renewed this year, with total membership at 276. She suggested the League partner with the Wisconsin Association of Student Councils, promoting League as the next step for civic involvement. The Board suggested that Harvey invite 3 to 5 students to events as guests of the Board.
 - The **Lively Issues Luncheon** will feature **State Senator Lena Taylor** speaking about predatory lending practices. Students from MATC will receive this year's **Outstanding Voter Service Award**.
 - **Program director Helen LeRoy** reported that responses to the National Study on the Direct Vote Compact are due May 1. UW
- Professor David Canon will speak at the February program on this topic.
- Members have had problems accessing study materials from the **LWVDC website**. Updates to the content and the design of the site will be developed in consultation with **webmaster Cindy Hoffland**.
 - The Board questioned the continued need to mail *Candidates' Answers* to League members and to pull separate copies from *Isthmus* for distribution to libraries and other public places that receive *Isthmus*. The Board will revisit the issue in January.
 - **Voter Services** director **Priscilla Thain** reported on election-related activities of Leaguers. She had several requests from schools for presentations targeted to students and suggested exploring partnerships with the City Clerk's office and the Kids Vote program to develop voter education materials for schools.
 - The Board decided to purchase buttons and/or nametags with the LWV logo for volunteers to wear when doing election work. Signs used at registration tables will be replaced prior to the next election.
 - **Thain** and **Rewey** will recruit members to write questions for the spring edition of *Candidates' Answers*.
 - **Bulletin editor Brook Soltvedt** will solicit reports from committee chairs to keep the membership informed of activities and opportunities for participation. Board members would like to receive minutes of committee meetings.
 - **President-Elect Donna Norton** will speak on the topic of immigration at the Wisconsin Council for the Social Studies conference in March, in response to a request from Dean Bowles.
 - The League received a certificate of recognition from the National Housing Trust Fund for its role in the enactment of PL 110-289.
 - The Board will meet at 6 PM on December 15 for training and development.

Thank You to Volunteers

Laura Chern, lchern@tds.net, 242-1334

Candidates' Answers is a big job that requires lots of volunteers who write explanatory texts, proofread copy, pull inserts, bulk-mail and deliver copies of our voter guide insert throughout Dane County, and proofread the website edition of CA.

With a record number of calls coming into the LWVDC office this election season, volunteer staffing of the phone for the fall primary on September 8, and on Election Day, November 4, was especially important.

As the coordinator of the efforts of the hard-working volunteers who conducted these two signature services for the voters of Dane County, I extend a big thank you to: Lois Bernbeck, Fran Bicknell, Kay Davis, Diane de Vos, Mary Ann Halvorson, Cindy Hoffland, Helen Horn, Betsy Jensen, Doug Johnson, Kathy Johnson, Janet Kane, Barbara Karavolas, Carol Kiemel, Lois Kiggins, Maureen Kind, Merilyn Kupferberg, Nancy Lersch, Helen LeRoy, Frances Locke, Joan Lundin, Diane Martin, Gloria Meyer, Sue Moline-Larson, Barbara Mortensen, Sylvia Poppelbaum, Claire Rider, and Brook Soltvedt.

Special thanks to Mary Bean and Sara Markham, who kept things moving along.

Voter Turnout Remarkable

Fred Wade, mtownlaw@execpc.com, 255-5111

Voters in Dane County deserve applause for the high turnout in the November election. The *Wisconsin State Journal* reported (Nov. 6, 2008) that 76 percent of eligible voters cast ballots in Dane County, and in a Nov. 7, 2008, interview, Madison City Clerk Marybeth Witzel-Behl said that 77 percent of eligible voters cast votes in Madison. The Village of Shorewood Hills had a turnout of nearly 92 percent. By national standards this is extraordinary and deserves recognition.

You might encourage similarly high participation in the future by sending a letter to the editor reminding readers about the number of eligible voters in your neighborhood who turned out to vote on Election Day 2008.

Poll Worker Recruitment Project

Sally Bowers, srrbowers@yahoo.com

The National League sponsored a project to recruit poll workers from a more diverse base. With pass-through funds, LWVDC hired Sally Bowers to recruit youth and young adults as poll workers.

My first step was learning about the Madison City Clerk's process for hiring young poll workers. Since many organizations were already recruiting poll workers on the college campuses, I focused my efforts on high school youth. Recruiting at the high schools required getting the approval of the individual principals, and finding a contact in each school to distribute poll worker applications. At the three high schools where at least 15 students were recruited, that teacher or staff person also needed to set up an orientation with the City Clerk's office. I checked in with each contact once a week and after the election, both to evaluate the process, and to show appreciation for their going above and beyond their regular teacher or staff load. I spoke to one class about voter registration and the importance of counting all votes. The students had already learned about the problems with counting votes in Florida in 2000 and in Ohio in 2004.

This project was wildly successful for everyone involved! More than 130 high school students, some 30 of whom were bilingual, worked at the polls. Students worked for pay or service-learning credits. The Madison City Clerk trained students in voter registration and assigned many that duty on Election Day. Having extra staff was especially helpful at polling locations with busy registration tables. Research shows that early engagement in the voting process positively impacts the future civic engagement of young people. Teachers and staff saw the hands-on involvement of their students with the election process as an incomparable learning opportunity. The League benefited through the contacts that were made with youth in the community. The program was publicized in *The Capital Times* (Oct. 10, 2008). A win-win for all in this 2008 election!

Voter Services News

Priscilla Thain, priscillathain@gmail.com, 233-5578

Office Administrator Sara Markham has compiled a detailed report of voter services efforts by Leaguers. Some highlights are included here.

Registration Summary

League members, with friends and family, maintained a strong presence throughout Dane County this summer and fall, registering more than 1,000 electors at 26 sites, assisting with absentee ballot requests, and answering questions about election procedures.

Global Affairs Forum

Candidates for the 2nd Congressional district debated foreign policy issues in a forum sponsored by a diverse group of civic organizations, including the League of Women Voters. LWVWI President Melanie Ramey moderated the debate between incumbent Democrat Tammy Baldwin and Republican challenger Peter Theron on October 23. Janet Kane and Andrea Kaminski set up the League banner and staffed a table with League materials. Brook Soltvedt timed the candidates' responses. The debate was recorded by radio and television outlets.

Voter Education

Bonnie Webber organized a mock election at Memorial High School. Sue Hoffenberg, Maureen Kind, Pat Watson, and Dorothy Wheeler worked with her.

Clare McArdle did an hour-long radio call-in on the Sunday before the election on The Pulse 1670 AM.

Fran Bicknell, Andrea Kaminski, Gloria Meyer, Pam Rewey, and Sandra Vandervest participated in a WKOW phone bank for two hours on Tuesday, October 28, from 5 to 7 PM.

City Clerk's Office Assisted By Leaguers

The Madison City Clerk's office, overwhelmed with unprecedented numbers of absentee ballot requests and in-person absentee voting, issued an SOS to a number of civic groups, seeking volunteers to help. Leaguers responded to the call! Volunteers helped people waiting in line to complete registration

forms and absentee ballot requests. They witnessed electors sign absentee ballot envelopes, sorted thousands of ballots into ward order for delivery to polling places, and assisted in processing overseas ballots.

The City Clerk instituted Quality Assurance Teams for this election. Volunteers assisted in processing absentee ballots at the polling places, and they helped to assure that proper procedures were followed throughout all stages of the election.

Election Stories

A student at Edgewood High School proudly announced to League registrars that he would turn 18 on November 4 and his Elections teacher had confirmed that he could register and vote for the first time.

At the Salvation Army Women's Shelter, a caseworker told of having been discouraged from registering to vote years ago. She took it upon herself to ask the League to register voters at the shelter one morning and one evening (35 registered) and she planned to use her van to shuttle the women to the Gates of Heaven to vote on Election Day.

Gift-Wrapping Fundraiser

This holiday season, the LWVDC will again be gift-wrapping books and other items in return for contributions to the League. To volunteer at Borders East, contact **Cheryl Furstace Daniels** (255-7513, cmfdaniels@gmail.com); for Borders West, **Joann Elder** (255-0533, elderj@ssc.wisc.edu).

LWVDC Website to Move

DaneNet is phasing out its web hosting services, so our website must move. If you would like to help research new web hosting options or have thoughts on the redesign of our website, please contact **Brook Soltvedt** (274-5184, soltvedt@tds.net).

Air Quality in Dane County

Diane Martin, dwmartin@charter.net, 698-4143

I am setting up a committee to study the quality of air in Dane County, our program topic for April. Please contact me if you are interested in participating.

Children and Families at Risk Committee

Carol Kiemel, ckiemel@sbcglobal.net, 286-1446

The Children and Families at Risk Committee is always in need of new members to help study and advocate for issues that are defined by the Social Policy positions of the Dane County, State, and National League of Women Voters. What we study and advocate for depends on the interests (I like to say passions) of its members. With more members, more can be done to further the League's positions. Currently, we need members to follow housing issues. We also need help when community members ask us to support specific initiatives. We were not able to respond to the City of Madison proposed 2009 budget because we simply didn't have enough members to do so.

In recent years, committee members have concentrated on prevention issues: safe, stable, affordable housing, family support services, and quality early childhood care and education. To do this effectively, a major emphasis has been on understanding the organizational complexity of the Human Services Department of Dane County and its delivery of services, especially through Purchase of Service Agencies. Last year we provided League membership with information about the value and cost of quality early care and education for all Dane County children. This year, in co-operation with the Education Committee, we are concentrating on four-year-old kindergarten programs for all Dane County children. We also testify at local budget hearings. This year we supported a county budget amendment to increase funds to Purchase of Service agencies by 1%. We are especially concerned about the Developmental Disabilities budget; one of our members is following this closely.

The committee usually meets the 4th Tuesday of the month from noon to 2 PM at the League office. This meeting day and time are flexible and can be changed if needed. Give one of the committee members a call to learn more: **Fran Bicknell, Kathy Fullin, Harriet Gorski, Carol Kiemel, Helen Kilbaner, and Dorothy Wheeler.**

What You Can Do About Domestic Abuse

Shannon Barry, Director of DAIS, Domestic Abuse Intervention Services, spoke at the November General Meeting about an issue that affects every family, directly or indirectly. Her list of ten things you can do to support DAIS is here in abbreviated form:

1. Help break the silence. Talk to people about domestic violence in our community and about the services DAIS provides.
2. Collect gently used books or new journals for women in shelter.
3. Make an in-kind donation from the list at www.abuseintervention.org/supportWish.html
4. Sponsor a cell phone drive. Contact Samantha Moore, 251-1237, ext. 301, samantham@abuseintervention.org.
5. Host a "Friendraiser." Contact Carrie Kilman, ext. 304, carriek@abuseintervention.org.
6. Participate in a one-time event. Contact Steve Bagwell, ext. 306, stephenb@abuseintervention.org.
7. Write a check in any amount.
8. Encourage your local and state representatives to support increased funding for domestic violence programs, because this issue is important to you.
9. Sign up to be on the DAIS mailing list.
10. Check out the DAIS websites to learn more about domestic violence, services available, and how to help someone you care about who may be a victim. www.madison.com/communities/abuseintervention/ or www.abuseintervention.org

Great Decisions 2009

Diane deVos, djdevos@chorus.net, 836-0070

Our *Great Decisions* discussion group will meet during February and March, 2009. This is a great way to learn about foreign policy issues and we hope you will join us. We will use the *Great Decisions* book, published by the Foreign Policy Association, which has background information and is an excellent resource whether or not you participant in the discussion group. The topics for 2009 are:

- U.S. and Rising Powers
- Afghanistan/Pakistan
- Energy and the Global Economy
- The Arctic
- Egypt in the 21st Century
- Global Food Supply
- Cuba After Castro
- Universal Human Rights

More information can be found on the Foreign Policy Association's website, www.fpa.org.

We will meet Thursday mornings, February 5 to March 26, 9:15 – 11:15, at the Westside (Madison) Senior Center, 602 Sawyer Terrace. Please let me know by December 30 if you plan to attend or just want a book. We will order books (~\$20) and have them available for you before the discussions start (we will bring the books to the Lively Issues Luncheon).

In Memoriam

In mid-November **Rebecca Young** succumbed to cancer. She was a tireless activist for many causes, including women's rights, women's reproductive rights, education, and transportation planning. She served on the Dane County Board, the Madison School Board, and seven terms in the State Assembly. Her hard work and tenacity earned her tremendous respect and allowed her to accomplish much.

Joan Johnson also passed away in November. A founding member of the Stoughton Unit that led to the expansion of the LWV of Madison to the LWV of Dane County, Joan also served on the Stoughton School Board, including as its President, and was a librarian in Stoughton.

January 2009 Unit Locations

Most units do not meet in January.

The Northeastside Unit is having a social gathering on Wednesday, December 17th, at Helen LeRoy's home, 1213 Menomonie Lane, 244-2377, to get better acquainted.

Northeastside Unit meets at 3:30 PM

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 21, 2009

Lakeview Public Library

2845 N. Sherman Ave.

Topic: Predatory Lending

Discussion Leader: Mary Bean

Unit Leaders:

Dorothy Wheeler, 244-4711;

dorothywheeler@charter.net

Mary Bean, 222-5783; marybean@charter.net

Calendar of Upcoming Events

January 10 – *Bulletin* deadline

January 12 – LWVDC Board Meeting

January 17 – Lively Issues Luncheon
(Predatory lending)

February 4 – General Meeting (Compact on the popular vote)

February 9 – LWVDC Board Meeting

February 10 – *Bulletin* deadline

March 4 – General Meeting (Four-year-old kindergarten)

March 9 – LWVDC Board Meeting

March 10 – *Bulletin* deadline

April 1 – General Meeting (Air quality in Dane County)

April 13 – LWVDC Board Meeting

May 6 – LWVDC Annual Meeting

Supplementary Membership Directory Listing

Please add the following information to your 2008-2009 Membership Directory:

Saunders, Ruth 2528 Van Hise Ave.
Madison 53705