



Bulletin

The League of Women Voters of Dane County, Inc.

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April, 2011

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Executive Committee:

- President** – Earnestine Moss
- Pres-Elect** – Donna Norton
- Secretary** – Barbara Mortensen
- Treasurer** – Kathy Johnson

Office Administrator – Sara Markham

Bulletin Editor – Brook Soltvedt

President’s Message

Earnestine Moss, emosse@aol.com, 244-0422

Please vote in the Wisconsin General Election on April 5th. This is a critical election! There are races for Dane County Executive, mayors, alders, school boards, and judges at every level from the Wisconsin Supreme Court to municipal judges. Remember, all politics is local. Armed with our *Candidates’ Answers Voter’s Guide*, vote for candidates who embrace democracy and will fight for the issues you care about. And encourage your friends and family members to vote. Voting is the only way to guarantee democracy. The League of Women Voters of Dane County (LWVDC) appreciates the efforts of all who exercise their rights, to ensure that Wisconsin’s government is open, fair, and just.

One legislator has said he will seek to amend Wisconsin’s constitution to eliminate the clause that allows either party to delay a vote by denying a quorum. Please contact your legislators and ask them to vote against any legislation that would remove this safeguard in the constitution.

May 4, 2011, is the Annual Meeting. We will vote on the budget, on proposed by-law changes, on program topics, on the slate of officers and any nominations from the floor. I encourage you to read all materials in this mailing, and to seek clarifications prior to the meeting.

At the March 2 issues forum we were provided with clarification on the difference between public and private charter schools. Two models: unionized teachers versus non-union, with some private schools holding longer school days and year. There was consensus, however, that charter schools are not the panacea for our education woes. They don’t guarantee the success of our children. Our April 6 issues forum has been arranged by our land use and transportation committee. We hope that you will join us!

Thank you to Sara, the Board members, and volunteers who deliver the programs and services for the LWVDC. Keep up the good work!

Our condolences to Elizabeth Lewis, whose husband recently passed away at Oakwood Village Nursing Home.

April Issues Forum

Wednesday, April 6, 2011, 7:00 PM

WISKILEAKS Reveals the True Story of Land Use and Transportation in Dane County, Wisconsin

Kathleen Falk, Dane County Executive

Kristine Euclide, member, Regional Transit Authority Board

The Capitol Lakes Grand Hall, 333 West Main St., Madison
(Free parking in the ramp across the street)

March Board Highlights

Treasurer–Pat Levin, representing the Finance Committee, presented the proposed budget for the 2011–2012 fiscal year. The budget follows our typical pattern of spending about \$50,000. We take in about \$35,000 (through donations, memberships, and investment income). The remaining \$15,000 comes from funds provided by large donations and bequests.

Voter Service–Priscilla Thain reported that the Government Accountability Board is considering a process for registering voters online. Public groups, possibly including LWV, will participate in a focus group to look at this option.

Annual Meeting–The Board reviewed plans for the annual meeting and selected this year’s recipient of the Carrie Chapman Catt award.

Challenge Grant!

Gail Bliss, 231-3511, gail3511@gmail.com

In 2009 the LWV of Dane County received an anonymous donation to start a challenge grant program. In 2010 a second anonymous donor joined the program. Both efforts were very successful. In 2009 we raised \$3,675 and in 2010 we raised \$5,345. Thanks to the visionary anonymous member who initiated this new tradition, the second anonymous member who expanded it in 2010, and also to the dozens of members who rose to the occasion and matched these challenge funds.

We now have an opportunity to open to the membership the option of pledging to our challenge grant fund. You can pledge in your own name or anonymously. We would like to raise \$3,000 in challenge funds, which we hope to match with donations from other members. The deadline for being part of the challenge group is April 11.

Challenge funds can be directed either to the LWVDC (which is nondeductible) or to the LWV Education Fund (which is tax-deductible). To pledge to the challenge grant, contact me or contact the League office. After the completion of the challenge, you will be contacted to fulfill your pledge.

The decision to print *Candidates' Answers* for the spring primary increased our outlay this year. The Board determined that the level of interest in the spring primary required this additional expense, and determined that we would make additional efforts at fundraising to offset those costs.

Please join us in creating a challenge fund for 2011.

Thanks for Your Support

Many thanks to those who recently responded to our annual Valentine’s Day birthday campaign (as of 3/18/2011):

Cynthia Benevenga
Frances Bicknell
Sally Carpenter
Jean Freese
Annrita Lardy
Helen LeRoy

Marie McCabe
Phyllis Reisdorf
Pam Rewey
Mary Sample
Carol Toussaint
Dorothy Wheeler

Voter Service

Candidate Forums

Thanks to **Mary Bean, Lori Kay, Pat Levin, Diane Martin**, and **Priscilla Thain** for responding to requests for the League to moderate candidate forums for the spring election. In addition, LWVDC co-sponsored a Communities United forum moderated by WORT.

Candidates’ Answers

Many thanks to the following volunteers who assisted with proofreading *Candidates’ Answers* for the April 5th spring election:

Mary Bean
Fran Bicknell
Laura Chern
Irene Durbak
Mary Ann Halvorson
Pat Kippert

Marie McCabe
Barbara Mortensen
Sylvia Poppelbaum
Claire Rider
Beth Ross
Brook Soltvedt

Community Outreach

Earnestine Moss, emosse@aol.com, 244-0422

On March 1, I attended a public forum sponsored by the Madison Urban League on the governor’s Budget Repair Bill. Jon Peacock from the Wisconsin Council on Children and Families (WCCF) provided an analysis of the bill. He indicated that many items in the bill, including changes to collective bargaining rights, were unnecessary. Unprecedented cuts made to healthcare programs hurt middle class and poor families, while huge tax breaks were given to the very rich and corporations. Peacock acknowledged that the public sector unions under attack have helped to ensure livable wages, favorable working conditions, and employee benefits that have been mutually beneficial to all parties over the years. He anticipates that donations to nonprofits will decrease drastically due to the middle class loss of income.

LWVDC hopes that a balance can be restored and that our students, the elderly, and the very poor will not have to bear the brunt of fixing the budget gap. Many among the wealthy support higher taxes on the rich and corporations.

On Thursday, March 10, I attended the Dane County forum on redistricting, in an effort to better understand the redistricting process. I am alerting other leaders in communities of color that the process is kicking off, and encouraging them to notify Scott McDonnell of their interest in participating in the process. The first meeting of the Dane County Redistricting Subcommittee is Monday, March 21, at 6:30 PM in the City County Building, Room 351.

Why I Belong to LWVDC

Deborah Speckmann, 444-2965; daspeckmann@charter.net

It is almost time to think about renewing your involvement with the League of Women Voters of Dane County, and who better to encourage our members to renew than our Ambassadors? So, we sent out a call to our members simply asking, “Why are you renewing your LWVDC membership?” Here is what we heard.

Mary Bean—I believe in nonpartisan politics at the local level and LWVDC’s Voter Service fits right in with that. I believe citizens need to be in contact with their elected officials at all levels and all levels of the League encourage members to do that through Action Alerts. Also, I am approaching the 50-year member mark and plan to continue as a member—perhaps more and more “of counsel” but still participating in Unit discussions.

Gail Bliss—With the very polarized political climate in this country today I appreciate being part of a serious deliberative organization that seeks to provide nonpartisan information and voter services.

Sally Carpenter—I am renewing my membership for the 36th year because the League is one of the very few non-partisan, political organizations around. I also belong to Common Cause for the same reason. I love the educational programs and have made many long time friends who share similar interests. I have been very impressed recently with the LWVWI informative emails concerning the new governor’s proposed budget and the legislature’s proposed bills.

Laura Chern—I believe in voter education.

Sue Hoffenberg—The League of Women Voters is the most impartial voice in politics. The League’s voter guide *Candidates’ Answers* and public forums for

candidates are the most objective way of finding out the candidates’ true stands on issues. The issues the League tackles are not limited to those selected by one or the other main political party. It can take on complex issues such as reducing the racial disparity in Dane County.

Kathy Johnson—I am renewing my membership in LWVDC because I believe in supporting good government and being an advocate for community good. I can’t imagine not being a League member.

Lois Kiggins—The rights of citizens have never been so threatened. Non-partisan education is vital.

Pat Levin—To learn about local issues and engage in reasonable discussion about the issues, which gives me a wider perspective. Beats doing the dishes and talking angrily to myself.

Myrna McNatt—I have been renewing my membership for almost 40 years because it’s an organization where I don’t just socialize, but also get educated on many topics. Over the years I have learned not only from the study topics, but also from members in our group.

Eileen Schutte—Whereas I have had many personal issues this past year and have not been very involved in the League, I still feel that it is very important to support an organization that continues to fight for democracy, especially in light of the current political environment. Much of what the League stands for is in jeopardy – fair election law, equitable access to education, women’s rights, the environment and healthcare as a right. But most importantly, the League stands for promoting democracy and assuring that the government represents the people, not large corporations. This is going to be a tough year in politics for Wisconsin and the League needs all the support that it can get. That is why I am renewing my membership.

Connie Threinen—I am renewing my LWVDC membership because I consider the League an inseparable part of my life. Since my graduation from the university the League has been an extension of my education and a base for much of my civic participation.

Thanks to those who have submitted their comments. We will continue to publish them in the May Bulletin. Please let us know why YOU are renewing!

If you have been a member of the LWV for at least 50 years by March 31st (joined in 1960–1961), please let us know, so that you can be recognized at the May 4th Annual Meeting.

April Unit Locations

League members meet monthly in one of five units to discuss the topic of that month's Issues Forum, using study materials provided by the program planners to guide the conversation. The discussion concludes with recommendations for further study or action. Units meet regularly at different times and locations. Find a meeting that is convenient for you and participate! Please let the host know that you plan to attend.

MONDAY, APRIL 18, 2011

MIDDLETON, 7 PM

Pat Levin, 836-1176; smlevin@tds.net
Community Room, Gardd Parc Condos
6767 Frank Lloyd Wright Dr.

Park behind building; walk through courtyard to lobby; Ring buzzer to # 221 if inside door is not open

Diane de Vos, 836-0070; djdevos@chorus.net

TUESDAY, APRIL 19, 2011

TUESDAY AFTERNOON, 12:45 pm

Helen DeBardeleben, 6225 Mineral Point Rd, #620
Oakwood Village Retirement Community
Jean Freese, 230-3540; jfreese7@gmail.com and
Elizabeth Lewis, 230-3101; bettyfay1916@gmail.com

TUESDAY EVENING WEST, 7:30 pm

Carol Kiemel, 2769 Marshall Pkwy, 286-1446;
ckiemel@sbcglobal.net
Gloria Meyer, 288-8160; gloria.meyer@juno.com

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 20, 2011

NORTHEASTSIDE, 3:30 pm

Pat Kippert, 837-5932
Lakeview Public Library, 2845 N. Sherman Ave.
Mary Bean, 222-5783; marybean@charter.net
Dorothy Wheeler, 244-4711; dorothywheeler@charter.net

DOWNTOWN DINNER, 5:30 pm

Capitol Lakes Retirement Center Restaurant "The Seasons"
333 W. Main St. – Free parking across the street
Sally Phelps, 251-4834; phelpssa@charter.net
Priscilla Thain, 233-5578; priscillathain@gmail.com

Calendar of Upcoming Events

- **April 6** – Issues Forum **Land Use**
- **April 10** – Deadline for *Bulletin*
- **April 11** – LWVDC Board Meeting
- **April 12** – LWVWI Legislative Day
- **May 4** – LWVDC Annual Meeting
- **May 9** – LWVDC Board Meeting
- **June 10–11** – LWVWI Annual Meeting
- **June 18–20** – LWVUS Council Meeting