



Annual Meeting Report

July 1, 2021 – June 30, 2022



Annual Meeting

Thursday, June 2, 2022

Agenda Overview

5:20 - Zoom waiting room opens

5:30 - Meeting begins

- Election results
- Committee reports
- 50 Year Member recognized
- Defender of Democracy awards presented

7:00 - Meeting concludes

Registration for the Annual Meeting will be sent to members by email in May. If you do not receive the registration link, please email the League at office@lwvdanecounty.org.

[Presented virtually June 2, 2022, due to COVID-19 pandemic safety precautions.]

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LWVDC Board, Committee Chairs, Off-Board Positions & Discussion Unit Leaders

Below are just some of the incredible volunteer leaders who power the League of Women Voters of Dane County. Thank you to all our leaders and volunteers for your time, energy, and wisdom over the past year.

Board Officers

President

Christine Clements

Vice President–Finance & Treasurer

Jean Jacobson

Vice President–Governance

Maria Spinozzi (through 11/21)

Secretary

Joan Provencher

Directors

Advocacy

Joan Schwarz*

Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

Mary Ellen Schmit*

Lisa Janairo (through 01/22)*

Fund Development

Vacant

Governance

Elizabeth Kanne*

Membership

Amber Rottier

Program Advocacy

Sue Jennik*

Pat Patterson (through 12/31)*

Georgiana Hernandez (through 09/21)

Publicity

Bonnie Chang & Laura Grueneberg

Voter Service

Barb Feeney

Chairs & Coordinators

Adopt-a-Highway

Doug Johnson

Bulletin Editor

Lauren Surovi

Dane County Voter ID Coalition Liaison

Ingrid Rothe

Financial Advisory Committee Chair

Susan Dietzel

Nominating Committee

Janet Van Vleck

Webmaster & Enews Editor

Brook Soltvedt

Program Advocacy

Program Co-Chair

Pat Patterson

Book Discussion Coordinators

Sally Gleason & Louise Robbins

Climate Chair

Meg Gordon

Making Democracy Work Chair

Joan Schwarz

Observer Corps Coordinator

Laurie Egge

Social and Racial Equity Chair

Aileen Nettleton

Working Group for Fair Maps Coordinator

Janine Edwards (through 10/21)

Voter Service

Voter Service Co-Chair

Candidates' Answers

Candidate Forums

Know Your Candidates TV Interviews

Apartment Outreach

High School Voter Education

Homeless Liaison

Library Liaisons

Senior Liaison

Sue Fulks

Kathy Fullin

Erin Grunze

Shel Gross

Betty Cohen (through 04/21)

Susan Latton (through 04/21)

Joan Provencher

Gail Bliss

Kathy Fullin & Shirley Haidinger

Shirley Haidinger

Discussion Unit Leaders

Coordinator

Central West

Downtown Dinner

Northeast Side

Prairie Ridge

West/Middleton

Pat Patterson

Kathy Johnson

Ingrid Rothe

Karen Gunderson

Dorothy Wheeler

Ralph Petersen, Helen Horn & Gloria Meyer

**Board Appointed*

President's Report [Christine Clements]

The 2021-22 year has been a year of transition for our Dane County League. The impact of the coronavirus on our ability to meet with each other has continued, but our capacity to substitute with Zoom and online document sharing grows increasingly impressive. We have turned over several experienced key leaders due to location, family, and job changes, but we have also been fortunate in identifying talented new leaders and past leaders who were willing to step forward to fill in gaps. We put our best efforts into supporting voter registration, access to the polls, fair maps, and voter rights legislation . . . and those fights go on. Always, LWVDC members and volunteers respond with resilience, creativity, and an abiding commitment to empowering voters and defending democracy. I am deeply inspired by the people I have had the privilege of working with in the LWV Dane County. Together we are truly stronger.

Among the highlights of the past year:

- The expansion of League efforts in diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI), including the adoption and implementation of a set of League-wide DEI recommendations with a quarterly assessment of progress. Our committees are striving to further enhance their practices with DEI principles.
- The application for and receipt of an award for a Mellon Fellow graduate student from the UW–Madison fellowship program who will help us improve the sustainability of our leadership model, with an emphasis on diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- Evaluation of all LWV Dane County media and development of guidelines to better understand how we can use our communications portfolio for greater impact.
- Development and early implementation of a model for expanding and enriching the quality of our partnerships with other organizations in the community.

Strategic priorities for next year include developing our partnerships for mutual advantage, continued integration of DEI values across the LWVDC, and further development of our capacity to leverage our changing organization for maximum impact, including expanding our funding sources. We hope to identify the resources to do a more extensive strategic planning initiative either this year or next.

I am extremely grateful to the Board of Directors and Executive Director Wendy Hathaway for their tireless efforts and their commitment to the mission and the values of LWVDC.

Forward.

Vice President/Governance Report

Unfortunately, we lost our very capable Vice President of Governance Maria Spinozzi in November. Maria had been serving in the VP role since February 2020 and accomplished a great deal for the League during her short term in this role. The three main initiatives in the governance area were:

- The Executive Director Search—After extensive Board discussion, a successful search was conducted to replace our exiting Executive Director Kate Vickery, resulting in the hire of Wendy Hathaway.
- Partnership Policy—The LWVDC Partnership Policy was updated to mitigate ongoing issues of ambiguity and debate and better align the policy with that at LWVUS.
- Vendor Policy—The LWVDC Vendor Policy was revised to provide greater guidance and support to the League’s diversity, equity, and inclusion commitments.
- Editorial and Publication Guidelines—Both general guidelines and specific guidelines for 11 LWVDC external communication tools were developed to allow better management of League communications for greater impact.

The Vice President assumes governance domain responsibilities. As part of these duties, a governance committee is expected to be developed in the coming year.

Treasurer’s Report [Jean Jacobson]

Income Statement

LWVDC is forecasted to complete FY 2021-22 with an operating loss of \$54,200 as compared to a budget operating loss of \$119,000 and to actual operating income of \$4,300 in FY 2020-21. Investment dividends and realized gains for the year remain on par with the prior year (\$17,000), but overall market values have declined \$29,150 from the start of the year. A net loss of \$64,500 is expected for the year after taking investment activity into account.

Revenue is estimated to total \$143,000 for FY 2021-22. Membership dues and contributions continue to be the primary revenue streams, accounting for 92% of the annual revenue; grants contribute 3-5% of annual revenue. Membership numbers have declined by more than 100 persons from the prior year. Current year fundraising campaigns, while successful, have fallen slightly below similar campaigns from last year. One less grant was received this year, and a second was one-half of last year’s amount.

- Last year’s revenue included the Dane County Voter ID Coalition contract (\$86,000), while the budget included grants (\$48,000) for DEI training and strategic planning.

Operating expenses are forecasted to total \$197,200 for FY 2021-22 versus the prior year of \$231,900 and the budget of \$334,000. Last year’s expenses included the Dane County Voter ID Coalition contract (\$82,000), while the budget included expenses (\$48,000) for DEI training and strategic planning that were contingent upon securing grant funding.

- General office expenses reflect the addition of the Executive Director position and the inclusion of funds for a contract grant consultant.
- Community engagement expenses are impacted by additional internship program hours/pay and support of the Fair Maps initiative. One fewer election results in lower

support costs such as for *Candidates' Answers*. The savings to the budget reflects the impact of COVID-19 on in-person events and the decision to reconsider further expansion of the internship program.

- Organizational expenses exceeded the prior year due to per-member payments to LWVWI and LWVUS based upon January 2021 membership numbers.

Balance Sheet

The Cash on Hand estimate reflects withdrawals from the Memorial Trust Fund to fund the anticipated operating deficit of \$54,200. The Board expects to take advantage of the 4.5% operations withdrawal authorized by plan documents, as well as a partial draw against the 15% withdrawal approved at the June 2021 Annual Meeting to support year 1 salary and benefits of the Executive Director position. These two withdrawals total \$54,200 and would reduce the balance of the Memorial Trust Fund to \$665,800. The timing and amount of the withdrawals will be reviewed and may be adjusted based upon available cash reserves.

It is to be noted that no withdrawals have been made from the Memorial Trust Fund since 2007. The value of these foregone withdrawals is approximately \$100,000, well in excess of the planned withdrawals.

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF DANE COUNTY			
FY 2021-22 ANNUAL REPORT			
INCOME STATEMENT COMPARISON			
	FY 20-21 Actuals	FY 21-22 Budget	FY 21-22 Estimate
REVENUE			
Membership Dues	39,113	41,250	37,581
Contributions and Bequests	97,749	116,000	94,334
Grants	8,000	52,000	5,500
Miscellaneous Revenue	9,246	5,800	5,621
Dane County Contract - Voter ID Coalition	82,210	0	0
TOTAL REVENUE	236,318	215,050	143,036
GENERAL OFFICE EXPENSES			
Rent	24,067	24,540	24,540
Office Related Expenses	14,391	13,610	12,840
Staff Salaries and Benefits	48,627	122,550	77,021
All Other Expenses	7,078	20,645	12,306
Subtotal	94,163	181,345	126,707
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT EXPENSES			
Event Expenses	1,983	10,400	750
Internship Program	6,766	20,000	10,524
Printed Materials	1,934	5,550	6,093
Publicity and Advertising	2,005	12,100	7,200
Candidates Answers	9,249	5,500	5,500
All Other Expenses	3,088	1,950	2,142
Dane County Contract - Voter ID Coalition	82,210	0	0
Subtotal	107,235	55,500	32,209
ORGANIZATIONAL EXPENSES			
Strategic Planning Retreat & Training	299	57,000	2,400
Membership Payments to LWVWI & LWVUS	25,629	33,247	32,949
All Other Expenses	4,634	7,000	2,984
Subtotal	30,562	97,247	38,333
TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSES	231,960	334,092	197,249
OPERATING INCOME (LOSS)	4,358	(119,042)	(54,213)
Investment Management Fees	0	0	(1,000)
Dividends/Interest/Realized Gains (Losses)	17,191	12,700	17,827
Unrealized Gains (Losses)	144,764	0	(29,149)
INVESTMENT INCOME (LOSS)	161,955	12,700	(10,322)
NET INCOME (LOSS)	166,313	(106,342)	(64,535)
FUNDING RESOURCES			
MTF Year 1 Executive Director Withdrawal	0	73,900	38,500
MTF 4.5% Operational Withdrawal	0	15,700	15,700
Cash Surplus/Usage	4,358	(29,442)	(13)
4/11/2022			

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF DANE COUNTY			
FY 2021-22 ANNUAL REPORT			
BALANCE SHEET COMPARISON			
	6/30/21 Actuals	6/30/22 Budget	6/30/22 Estimate
CASH			
Old National Checking Account	38,719	10,646	48,373
Old National Money Market Account	67,137	42,140	52,159
Memorial Trust Fund Cash	4,864	0	0
Subtotal	110,720	52,786	100,532
ALL OTHER ASSETS			
Accounts Receivable	555	0	0
Undeposited Funds	1,965	2,000	1,500
Prepaid Expenses, Rent & Deposits	4,310	4,475	4,038
Subtotal	6,830	6,475	5,538
INVESTMENTS - Memorial Trust Fund	727,484	594,371	665,804
TOTAL ASSETS	845,034	653,632	771,874
LIABILITIES			
Accounts Payable	5,312	4,600	6,911
Credit Cards Outstanding	1,020	500	475
Unearned or Deferred Revenue	15,179	3,000	7,500
Subtotal	21,511	8,100	14,886
EQUITY			
Unrestricted Net Assets	657,210	752,174	823,523
Net Income	166,313	(106,642)	(66,535)
Subtotal	823,523	645,532	756,988
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND EQUITY	845,034	653,632	771,874
4/11/2022			

Finance Committee Report [Jean Jacobson]

The Finance Committee is a standing committee of the LWVDC and is appointed by the Board of Directors at the first Board meeting of the fiscal year. The committee consists of at least five members, including the Treasurer and two Board Directors. The duties of the committee include monitoring the financial condition of LWVDC, preparing an annual budget, monitoring investments, and ensuring compliance with all legal filing requirements.

The Finance Committee identified and worked on the following goals and objectives during the current fiscal year:

- Developed dashboard metrics for Finance, Fund Development, and Membership. These dashboards provide a pictorial view of metrics used to measure the impact of each domain's activities as well as the financial health of the organization. Currently used mostly for Board Reports, the dashboards could become an informational tool available to League members.
- Worked with the Financial Advisory Committee to evaluate the current model of using League volunteers to invest/manage the Memorial Trust Fund versus hiring a professional investment management firm. Research and vetting by the Financial Advisory Committee led to their recommendation that the League hire a local investment firm, eCIO. The Board approved the recommendation in January.
- Developed working copies of policies and procedures related to Finance, Fund Development, and Membership. Work continues in this area with a targeted completion date of June 30, 2022.

Other activities of the Treasurer and the Committee included:

- Oversight of an Annual Financial Review as required by the Bylaws.
- Completion and review of the annual 990 tax return.
- Completion of the annual insurance renewal including the consolidation of all policies under one insurance agency, Ansay and Associates.
- Support the Domain Committees in their completion of domain budgets for FY 2022-23.
- Presentation of the FY 2022-2023 Budget to the Board for their approval.

Many thanks to the outstanding work of the members of the two Finance Committees: Julie Allen, Susan Dietzel, Linda Syth, Helen Horn, Paul Lindquist, Amber Rottier, Joan Provencher, Linda Dietrich, Caroline Liedtke, Sally Carpenter, and Alexandra Graff.

Financial Advisory Committee Report [Susan Dietzel]

The Financial Advisory Committee is responsible for monitoring League investments and recommending policy regarding the Memorial Trust Fund (MTF) to the Board. The MTF is a Board-directed endowment that allows for the use of 4.5% of the annual value of the portfolio averaged over five years for LWVDC expenses. The value of the MTF on December 31, 2021, was \$775,802 compared with a value of \$657,389 one year ago, a return of 18%.

The 4.5% withdrawal to support operations is expected to resume this current fiscal year. In addition, a withdrawal to partially fund the newly created Executive Director position is anticipated. At the June 2021 Annual Meeting, membership approved a withdrawal of up to 15% of the value of the Memorial Trust Fund to fund the first-year salary and benefits of the Executive Director. The actual withdrawal amounts will depend upon the operating deficit and the estimated cash reserves at the end of June 2022.

In the last 10 years, the MTF increased in value by over 400%, largely due to donations from the Ogg Foundation and other bequests and donations, as well as an increase in investment earnings. Because of the size of the MTF and the commitment to financial integrity, the Committee felt it would be prudent to obtain the services of a professional financial advisor. Members conducted research, including obtaining references, and submitted a proposal that was approved by the Board to hire eCIO, a local company specializing in nonprofits.

With the assistance of eCIO advisors, the Committee drafted a new Investment Policy Statement to guide the fund's investment portfolio and incorporate accountability standards that will be used for monitoring the progress of the portfolio's investment program. Reporting services through eCIO will greatly enhance the Committee's ability to monitor investments.

	Value 12/31/2020	Purchases & Sales	Income & Net Return	Value 12/31/2021
Vanguard 500 Index Fund Inv	\$ 80,230		\$ 22,997	\$103,227
Vanguard Mid-Cap Index Fund	117,296		28,749	146,045
Vanguard Total Stock Mkt Index Inv	103,191	\$ 16,474	29,880	149,545
Vanguard Balanced Index Fd	113,540		16,142	129,682
Vanguard Capital Opportunity	56,605		11,902	68,507
T Rowe Price Converg Allocation Fd	68,691		4,879	73,570
Dodge & Cox Income Fd	30,518		(278)	30,240
Fidelity Investment Grade Bond Fd	70,844		(722)	70,122
Schwab Bank Account	16,474	(16,474)	4,864	4,864
Total Portfolio Value	\$657,389	\$ 0	\$ 118,413	\$775,802

Committee members: Sally Carpenter, Susan Dietzel, Alexandra Graff, Helen Horn, Jean Jacobson, Caroline Liedtke

Fund Development Committee Report [Chris Clements and Wendy Hathaway]

Over the last year, LWVDC conducted two member fundraising appeals and, as of this writing, is preparing a third—the May Challenge, which is supported by an incredibly generous matching gift of \$10,000 from an anonymous member donor.

The Fall/End-of-Year appeal, which ran November–December 2021, raised \$27,169 from 97 member and non-member donors. The success of this appeal was due in part to a \$5,000 matching donation made by a generous LWVDC member. The 2022 Valentine’s Day appeal, which was also an opportunity to celebrate the League’s 102nd birthday, raised \$3,250 thanks to donations from 26 members.

As of April 1, LWVDC also received \$17,294 in general donations from members, including gifts made at the time of joining or renewing membership; \$9,907 in general donations from non-members; and \$1,223 in corporate matching gifts.

Finally, LWVDC was the recipient of three grants supporting the work of Voter Service. The Evjue Foundation awarded \$5,000 to help fund printing and preparation costs of the *Candidates’ Answers* publication. The League of Women Voters Education Fund awarded \$1,500 to support voter registration activities for new citizens. And the Wisconsin Public Education Network’s Wisconsin Alliance for Excellent Schools awarded \$500, which was used to place digital ads promoting the Voter ID Coalition’s Voter Helpline.

In the coming 2022-23 fiscal year, the League will focus on diversifying our fundraising portfolio, which includes hiring a contract grant consultant.

All donations make a difference, whether \$5 or \$5,000. We are grateful to everyone for their gifts to the League, whether that’s time, talent, or resources.

Thank you to the members of the Fund Development Committee for your work this year: Julie Allen, Gail Bliss, Jean Jacobson, Lisa Janairo, Megan Severson, Mary Ellen Schmit, and Caryl Terrell.

Program Committee Report [Sue Jennik and Pat Patterson]

The Program Advocacy Committee responsibilities are set forth in Article X, Sec. 2(c) of the League's Bylaws: "The duties of the committee are to recommend program priorities for Board and membership approval and to plan and present the selected topics and recommended actions to the membership and the community at forums and other informational meetings."

Many League members helped plan and present the Program Advocacy activities. Their work is greatly appreciated; unfortunately, we do not have the space to name them here.

- The priorities approved by the membership and the Board for the past year were: Making Democracy Work; Climate Change; and Social and Racial Equity. The Committee established a subcommittee in each area, overseen by the Program Advocacy Steering Committee.
- Five forums were presented on these issues. Topics included fair maps; protecting the vote; reducing carbon use; eviction; and low-income housing. In addition, the Lively Issues meeting featured Matt Rothschild of the Wisconsin Democracy Campaign speaking on saving democracy in Wisconsin. An average of 96 people attended each event.
- There are five Unit Discussion groups that regularly meet to discuss the issues raised in the forums: Central West; Capitol Lakes; Middleton West; Northeast Side; and Prairie Ridge. An average of 26 members attended each of these discussions.
- The Climate Change Subcommittee issued a transportation challenge to members to reduce their vehicle miles traveled. Forty-six participants agreed to track their vehicle miles and explore alternate forms of transportation. The subcommittee held a midwinter check-in to discuss insights; a ride to explore bus transportation; and another ride to experience using the Madison BCycle program.
- The Program Committee organized discussions of the following books: "The Sum of Us" by Heather McGhee; "Braiding Sweetgrass" by Robin Wall Kimmerer; "Twelve Ways to Save Democracy" by Matt Rothschild; "Maid: Hard Work, Low Pay and a Mother's Will to Survive" by Stephanie Land; and "How the Word Is Passed: A Reckoning with the History of Slavery Across America" by Clint Smith. An average of 20 members attended each of these discussions.
- Twelve League members attended a pilot eight-week Civic Education seminar hosted by Advocacy Director Joan Schwarz about the state of our government today and the need to restore the guardrails of democracy.

The Program Committee prepared and distributed a membership survey to determine the priorities for the coming year. The issues with the highest votes were: Election Integrity (64); Economic Opportunities for All (61); Campaign Finance Reform (59); Neighborhoods for Social and Racial Equity (58); Judicial Integrity (56); and Climate Resistant Rural and Urban Communities (53). These priorities are subject to approval by the Board and the membership at the Annual Meeting.

Advocacy Report [Joan I. Schwarz]

The Advocacy Committee provides opportunities to be more active in timely nonpartisan public issues campaigns. The Committee has a tripartite structure of the Observer Corps, the Advocacy Corps, and the Speakers Bureau. Examples of 2021-22 Advocacy efforts include:

Advancing the League's position on redistricting

- Submitted oral and written testimony as individuals to the People's Maps Commission.
- Participated in meetings, letter writing, and phone banking with the Fair Maps Coalition.
- League member Janine Edwards coordinated a working group on redistricting in the DeForest/Windsor area with a digital billboard, outreach, and Spanish radio advertising.
- Participated in a Legislative Meeting Day on redistricting maps.
- League member Joan Schwarz was a nominated member on the Dane County Redistricting Commission and the Madison Ad Hoc Redistricting Council.
- League member Caryl Terrell submitted an oral statement to the Dane County Redistricting Commission in support of its nonpartisan work on maps.
- Participated in a Fair Maps End Gerrymandering Rally at the capitol.
- Participated in the Fair Maps Lobby Day.
- League member Joan Schwarz submitted an oral statement on behalf of LWVWI and LWVDC opposing the legislature's senate, representative, and congressional maps.

Advancing LWVDC's position on the administration of justice

- Lili Crane, Jill Jokela, and Joan Schwarz attended the first in the LWVWI Fair Courts Series: Understanding Wisconsin's Courts and Judicial Elections.
- Kathleen Fullin and Mary Anglim observed all of the meetings of the new City of Madison Police Civilian Oversight Board (PCOB) for the LWVDC. The League sent several communications to the PCOB about their processes for public involvement.

Monitoring government meetings

- The Observer Corps' five members observed the following Dane County meetings: Criminal Justice Council; Land Conservation Committee; Agriculture Environment and Natural Resources Committee; Health and Human Needs Committee; and Public Protection and Judiciary Committee. A member also observed the Wisconsin Election Commission.
- Observer Corps procedures, report forms, and data spreadsheets were updated.
- League member Joan Schwarz attended a Michigan statewide Observer Corps meeting.

Developing advocacy outreach to the community

- 45 League members attended the Braver Angels workshop "Depolarizing Within."
- Advocates organized training and a letter-writing campaign for election-integrity issues, focusing on the 2020 election audit, fraudulent electors, and protection of poll workers in upcoming elections.

In the coming year, the committee will work to ensure that our efforts reflect the principles of diversity, equity, and inclusion in all its forms. To that end, we are committed to partnering with community allies to develop and implement our campaigns. Advocates will be organizing future campaigns on judicial integrity, campaign-finance reform, and civil discourse.

Voter Service Report [Barb Feeney and Sue Fulks]

The Voter Service Steering Committee (VSSC) oversees and directs the work of volunteers who provide citizens with unbiased factual information and nonpartisan assistance to register and prepare to vote. The Voter Service (VS) work is carried out by nine subcommittees working under the direction of subcommittee chairs who report to the VSSC.

Ongoing Work

Many volunteers are carrying out the ongoing work of **reaching out** to senior facilities, libraries, Meals on Wheels, and food pantries.

The **High School Team** recently held voter registration events at several high schools in collaboration with student leaders.

Apartment Outreach continues. Challenges with apartment outreach have led to the development of a pilot project to develop two neighborhood teams. (See below for more information.)

In cooperation with the Dane County Voter ID Coalition, we are working with the Dane County sheriff on issues related to voting for **jail residents**.

Successful voter registration events have been held at **Madison College**.

The **Voter Helpline** operates year-round thanks to the experienced volunteers who staff it.

During the distribution of **bus passes at UW–Madison** in Fall 2021, LWVDC volunteers staffed voter registration tables outside the ASM building on Campus Mall and Union South. League volunteers also assisted at campus locations on National Voter Registration Day.

Two **UW–Madison interns**, Tabitha Houghton and Kayla Swartz, have continued their work on the UW BadgersVote Team. Tabitha was named the lead intern for the team at the end of 2021. The Morgridge Center for Public Service staff member who oversaw the BadgersVote team left his job at the end of December. Recruitment efforts have been underway since then to find a replacement.

Outreach to voters continued at farmers' markets, the Madison Night Market, the UW–Madison Public Service Fair, the Beacon homeless day resource center, and elsewhere.

The Spring 2022 issue of **Candidates' Answers** was produced and distributed in March. The informative weekly issue of **Enews** provides our members with timely information about VS activities and opportunities provided by other organizations. LWVDC's presence on social media is creative and has attracted many followers, including nonmembers.

New Directions

The VSSC applied for and received a **New Citizens Grant** from LWVUS to reach out to immigrants who have become citizens and are eligible to vote. This project is being directed by a team of volunteers who will partner with organizations that work with new immigrants. To the greatest extent possible, we are asking League volunteers who have existing relationships with these organizations to help make connections. The grant funding makes it possible to provide special non-English publications and, potentially, “extras” for special events. The goal is to make lasting connections with these organizations.

A new subcommittee, **Government Collaboration**, is recruiting volunteers who live in outlying municipalities to review their local clerk’s website to assess the completeness of voter information and offer suggestions for improvements. Thus far, 19 volunteers have signed up to carry out this work.

The VSSC recently approved a new initiative to explore the development of **neighborhood teams**. These groups will work within a defined geographic area, such as a municipality or voting ward, and will combine League resources with hyperlocal knowledge and creativity to engage with their neighbors and promote civic participation. Apartment outreach, library liaisons, senior liaisons, and others may be wrapped into each team’s strategy. This project is starting with a pilot team in the City of Fitchburg; a low-voter turnout neighborhood in the City of Madison will be selected for the second pilot team.

VSSC and Executive Director Wendy Hathaway are **rejuvenating more regular communications** with our very lengthy list of voter service volunteers. Communications include topics such as volunteer sign-ups, voter registration deadlines, trainings, quizzes, and more. We also surveyed volunteers to find new ways to match them with available opportunities.

To improve internal VSSC communication, the subcommittee chairs now include **written reports** in the monthly VSSC meeting agenda. There is not enough meeting time available for verbal reports, so the written reports are provided to ensure that we all know what is underway. These reports include a report from the ED and a report from the LWVDC Board.

At the request of the Board, **VS liaisons** have been appointed for the following domains: Communications, Membership, Fund Development, Finance, and DEI. We formalized the role Bonnie Chang had been playing informally as our liaison to the Madison City Clerk’s Office.

Our technology leader, Paul Lindquist, created an online tool for VSSC volunteers to **track the hours** they put in as a way to get a sense of how much time each volunteer position takes.

Looking Ahead

A small army of dedicated volunteers gives hundreds of hours to carry out the work of the Voter Service domain. We are deeply grateful for the work that is done by volunteers who perform these tasks with great dedication and often without recognition. A challenge ahead is to match more of our members with opportunities to serve, so we can be even more effective in our work. An additional challenge is to intentionally develop new leaders to ensure the work continues and to lighten the load of the existing leadership team.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion [Mary Ellen Schmit]

First and foremost, we need to thank Lisa Janairo for her tireless work on behalf of DEI for years, as chair and champion. Lisa stepped away from her position as DEI Director in compliance with our Bylaws in order to run for office in the City of Middleton. The DEI Committee has been operating since 2020; 2021–22 was the first time the chair became a Board position. Mary Ellen Schmit filled in as director during the remaining months of this term.

To improve communication across the organization, liaisons from committees throughout LWVDC attend and report at DEI Committee meetings. The emphasis this year has been on decentralizing DEI efforts throughout the League and was addressed with recommendations approved by the Board and then reviewed regularly.

Building on last year's education (in particular Carolyn Jefferson-Jenkins's book and webinar), the action taken this year to transition the Carrie Chapman Catt Award to a newly named Defender of Democracy Award is a step toward owning our past and charting our future. Following up on the recommendation to offer DEI-related training, LWVDC sponsored a group of members to participate together in the virtual "Black History for a New Day" course taught by the Nehemiah Center for Urban Leadership Development. Multiple local Leagues in Wisconsin, including LWV Dane County, are coordinating to cosponsor "How We Got Here: The Hidden History of Diversity in America," a presentation by Reggie Jackson, scheduled for May 12. DEI Cafés continue to be held, giving space where members can together process and address current issues. Contributions to the *Bulletin* included "Untangling the Web of Inequality That We've Woven," "Amplifying the Good, Learning from the Inexcusable," and "DEI Reflections: First Trust, then Combined Efforts," as well as committee updates.

Working through the LWVWI Community Alliances Committee, our members also have been involved in efforts to develop guidance for land acknowledgments and create a process for reporting and resolving incidents of bias.

Coordination and decentralization of DEI is evident in efforts such as avoiding religious and cultural holidays when scheduling gatherings; rethinking how we welcome new members; a more intentional sharing of pronouns; the process to recruit members for leadership positions; and data collection using DEI dashboards. Publicity has been responding promptly to support communities within Dane County when social justice issues arise. We continue to try to improve our culture of reflection in League meetings, with future work on messaging through visual imagery, social media, and listening in neighborhood teams. Website redesign should include a process of active input from diverse voices. Finally, Board and member training in implicit bias, microaggressions, and other DEI-related principles will continue.

Adopt-a-Highway [Doug Johnson]

Volunteers again worked to support the twice-a-year commitment of LWVDC to Adopt-A Highway along U.S. Highway 14 just west of Middleton. Due to concern about COVID-19, there was not the usual pick up in the spring 2020. In September 2020, 11 participants picked up 16 bags. In May 2021, eight volunteers picked up 13 bags of debris on a perfect spring day. In October 2021, six volunteers picked up 11 bags of debris plus a \$10 bill!

Membership Report [Amber Rottier]

The Membership Committee works to welcome new League members, assist with connecting members to the different areas of the League, and implement initiatives to increase membership engagement and retention. We report our membership numbers to the national League yearly on January 31. As of January 31, 2022, we have 528 members, compared with 613 members reported on January 31, 2021.

Key Accomplishments

- The Membership Committee hosted virtual **Member Hangouts** for members to get together informally, meet new members, and reconnect with old friends. League members enjoyed the opportunity to socialize, something that has been greatly missed with the move to virtual meetings during the pandemic.
- Virtual **member orientation** sessions were held to provide additional information about the League and volunteer opportunities for both new and existing members. Voter Service, DEI, and Program Advocacy presented about engagement opportunities.
- The Committee continues to evolve the process for contacting and **onboarding new members**.
- The annual **Member Activities and Interests Survey** has been revamped based on feedback from members.

Thank you to the hardworking members of the Membership Committee. Sally Gleason and Margaret Fuguitt made countless calls to new members and connected them with their areas of interest. Joy Cardin, Mary Ellen Schmit, and Brook Soltvedt always provided meaningful insights and were essential in all membership event planning.

In the coming year, our strategic initiatives and priorities will include improving member engagement by talking to new members to identify their interests and connect them to domains of interest; holding quarterly orientation sessions for new and existing members so they can learn more about the League and opportunities to participate; and holding quarterly social events for members.

Publicity Report [Bonnie Chang & Laura Grueneberg]

During 2021-22, the LWVDC Publicity Committee continued outreach efforts with Dane County residents despite the ongoing pandemic. Members of the Madison Common Council, Dane County Board of Supervisors, and several state representatives now follow and engage with all LWVDC social media accounts, and we have earned a reputation as a reliable source of trusted information for our followers.

During July and August 2021, social media postings focused on diversity, the John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act/For The People Act, HR1 & S1, and Civic Health Month. These efforts reaped over 200% increase in our impressions on Instagram. During late 2021, social media focused on Disability Vote's newest campaign, Indigenous Peoples' Week, Spanish language access, and redistricting. At this time, we are still continuing to grow and our engagement is still up despite this not being a presidential election year. Our platforms continue to be a valuable hub for Dane County voting information.

In line with the League's goal of expanding its DEI outreach, we continue uplifting the voices of youth, BIYOC, those with disabilities, BIPOC, those who have experienced homelessness, those who have been incarcerated, and the LGBTQIA+ community. We are growing LWVDC's social media following with local BIPOC leaders and strengthening relationships with community organizations by continuously showing up in person and collaborating with these groups. Publicity's use of "alt text" functions and highlighting Spanish language resources helps with this goal.

We regularly emailed press releases to Madison and Dane County community newspapers, television and radio stations, and nonprofit community organizations with common interests. This, combined with social media reminders and events to which viewers could RSVP, meant attendance at forums remained consistent, and even increased, when we could not meet in person.

Specific outreach efforts included promotion of *Candidates' Answers*, Making Democracy Work, Social and Racial Equity, and Climate Crisis forum events, voter information, and the Voter Helpline.

Executive Director Letter [Wendy Hathaway]

This has certainly been (another) year of change for the League of Women Voters of Dane County. After more than two years of social distancing and doing most of our work online and via email, we are looking ahead and beginning to plan in-person member gatherings, educational programming, and voter engagement. The leaders and volunteers who make up each domain are working tirelessly to continue with traditional activities while creatively designing new ways to further the mission of the League. We said farewell to a few LWVDC leaders and welcomed new ones. And, you have two new staff members supporting the work of the League. I joined the League as executive director November 2021; Kerry Helmer came on board in February 2021 as our new office administrator and jumped right into the deep end, learning about the many and sometimes-complex inner workings of LWVDC while taking the lead on new projects and meeting many new faces.

As we look ahead to the next year, I can't wait to get to know more of you and tap into the extraordinary amounts of enthusiasm and expertise we have among our membership. Together, we will build and strengthen relationships with community partners, increase civic engagement throughout Dane County in a variety of ways across domains, find new and meaningful ways for more members to engage with the League, and develop a more sustainable and inclusive leadership model.

As a former volunteer, a current member, and now as Executive Director, I'm especially proud to serve the League and our community during this defining moment for our democracy. Each and every person reading this is a crucial part of our fight to empower voters and defend democracy and I look forward to partnering with you all in the coming months and years.

Special thanks to everyone who contributed to writing, editing, and designing our Annual Meeting materials, as well as those who helped in the planning of our online gathering.