

**The League of Women Voters of Dane County, Inc.**

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**November 7, 2012, 7:00 pm**

**Engaging in Civil Discourse**

*Speakers*

**Sam Buffet, Minister and Negotiator, John Knox Presbytery**

**Chris Rickert, Metro Columnist, *Wisconsin State Journal***

*Performers*

**Reach Out Wisconsin**

**Ron Dolen, Carol & Scott Grabins, Katie Songer**

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

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**Coming Up**

**Lively Issues Forum**

January 19, 2013

11:30 to 2:00

Madison Concourse Hotel

*"Cleaning up our Politics"*

Jay Heck, Common Cause

Mike McCabe, Wisconsin

Democracy Campaign

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**Executive Committee:**

**President** – Donna Norton

**Secretary** – Barbara Mortensen

**Treasurer** – Helen Horn

**Newsletter editor** – Katie Mulligan

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Sara Markham

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Website: [www.lwvdanecounty.org](http://www.lwvdanecounty.org)

Hours: MWF 9-12; TR 9-12:30

**Beyond Medicine toward Health**

Should Wisconsin raise its tax on beer?

That is one of the specific questions that a population health perspective can help voters answer.

In her presentation at the October Issues Forum, Julie Willems Van Dijk, R.N., Ph.D., an associate scientist at the UW-Madison Population Health Institute, described the factors that contribute to health outcomes and enable professionals and others figure out how to improve them.

The good news is that health behaviors, which are under the control of the individual, have more impact on health outcomes than clinical care. Health behaviors include tobacco and alcohol use, diet and exercise, and sexual activity. Clinical care, what typically is regarded as medical treatment, includes access to and quality of care and accounts for only 20 percent of health outcomes.

Social and economic factors, such as employment, income, family and social support, account for 40% of health outcomes.

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## Beyond Medicine (cont.)

Staff at the UW-Madison Population Health Institute used measures of components of health factors, such as the violent crime rate, to develop a ranking for each Wisconsin county. Dane County ranks 3.

Health outcomes include measures of mortality, such as premature death, and morbidity, such as poor mental health days. Dane County ranks 11 in this area.

The method enables policy makers and members of the general public to pinpoint specific actions that will promote health. Primary care doctors, for example, can be trained to question patients about diet rather than focusing exclusively on the treatment of diabetes. Officials can encourage the development of support networks, such as those available at senior centers.

A new Action Center at the Institute will offer a searchable database of evidence-based policies and programs that promote better health.

More information is available at [www.countyhealthrankings.org](http://www.countyhealthrankings.org)

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## Great Decisions

LWVDC will sponsor a Great Decisions discussion group Thursday afternoons beginning January 31. Learn about Egypt, the euro, NATO, Iran, Intervention in Libya and Syria and other topics.

The briefing book costs \$20 and must be ordered by December 20. Contact Gail Bliss at 231-3511 or [gail3511@gmail.com](mailto:gail3511@gmail.com).

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## In Memoriam

Joy Parfitt died in her sleep on September 5 in Madison. An active League member, she worked at the polls for countless elections.

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## President's Message

Donna Norton, Ph.D., [vwn837skip@aol.com](mailto:vwn837skip@aol.com)

We are just completing one of the harshest and uncivil presidential campaigns in United States history. Even the headline in a recent issue of *Isthmus* asked "Will We Ever Agree on Anything Again?" Ideological differences argue for and against issues such as government-sponsored Medicare vs. private insurance programs, government controlled Social Security vs. privatized retirement accounts, cutting taxes for the wealthiest individuals vs. building financial and job support for the middle class.

Into this climate, your LWVDC and the LWVWI embarked on a joint study with the Wisconsin Council of Churches called a "Season of Civility." Many of us took a workshop that emphasized ways of healing democracy.

The November Issues Forum explores this topic. Sam Buffat, a minister with considerable experience negotiating conflict, focuses on developing understanding through using ethics in civil discourse even when interacting with people with whom we disagree. Speakers from Reach Out Wisconsin demonstrate how we can engage in civil discourse. The study materials will prepare League members to ask questions and provide the units with suggestions to promote a season of civility.

As you approach this study topic, remember that LWVDC board members are in non-partisan positions. Let me leave you with the definition of non-partisan and partisan given by the Wisconsin State Auditor. The facts as reflected in figures and numbers are non-partisan; the ways those figures and numbers are presented and interpreted make them partisan.

All of the candidates in this election have reported numbers. Now we must see if civility can be used to help everyone interpret these numbers in ways that will get partisanship out of government and will get something accomplished. Hopefully, civil discourse will develop integrity and mutual respect in the years to come.

## Making Democracy Work

Angry at misleading television ads? You can do something about it.

The LWVUS launched Truth in Campaign Advertising with the Annenberg Public Policy Center. Television stations have a legal right to reject any television advertisement, except by a qualified candidate, if they believe the ad is misleading or inaccurate.

Misleading ads by “outside groups” are the focus of the effort. According to the LWVUS, outside group ads are more likely to spread misinformation, as studies have shown that those ads contain a high degree of both attacks and misinformation.

We might be too late to stop these ads during this campaign cycle, but they will be back.

The LWVUS website offers tools to challenge these misleading ads, including a video on “What You Can Do” and talking points for meeting with a general manager of a television station.

Check out the Annenberg website [www.flackcheck.org](http://www.flackcheck.org) and the LWVUS website [lww.org](http://lww.org)

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The Wisconsin Democracy Campaign launched an “End Legal Bribery” campaign in September to close loopholes in Wisconsin’s ethics code, amending the conflict of interest law so that officials would have to abstain from acting on matters of interest to those who provide substantial campaign support.

Come to the **Lively Issues Luncheon** on January 19 to learn more about this timely effort. More information at [www.wisdc.org](http://www.wisdc.org).

## Short Takes

Thanks to the 73 percent of the members of LWVDC who have renewed their memberships. **Steve Ploeser**, Membership Chair, will follow up by phone with those who have not yet renewed. Scholarships for membership dues are available.

LWVDC members registered more than 300 voters at the Farmers’ Market this summer. Voter Services Chair **Gail Bliss** will have a complete report on recent Voter Services activities in the next *Bulletin*.

League member **Kathleen Fullin** organized a registration drive October 2-4 at MATC campuses. Thanks to the following volunteers who registered 70 voters: Mary Anglim, Tracey Bietz, Elizabeth Faye, Hoffenberg, Ellen Karlson, Joanie Kanter, Barbara Karavolas, and Ingrid Rothe.

With funds from the Evjue Foundation, Voter Services Chair **Gail Bliss** arranged for brief radio advertisements for a website, DaneVoterGuide.com, that directs listeners to information about voter registration and to the online version of “*Candidates’ Answers*.”

The LWVDC Board of Directors voted to publish only an online version of “*Candidates Answers*” for the spring 2013 primary. The online version will be publicized in *Isthmus* and other venues.

**Lois Kiggins**, LWVDC Publicity Coordinator, needs volunteers to post flyers about Issues Forums at neighborhood and senior centers. Contact her at [lkiggins@chorus.net](mailto:lkiggins@chorus.net).

## Unit Meetings

*League members meet in one of five units to discuss the topic of that month's forum. The discussion concludes with recommendations for further study or action. Find a meeting that is convenient for you and let the host or unit leader know you plan to attend*

Wednesday, November 14, 3:30 pm  
NORTHEASTSIDE  
Lakeview Public Library  
2845 N. Sherman St.  
Dorothy Wheeler, 244-4711; [dorothywheeler@tds.net](mailto:dorothywheeler@tds.net)

Wednesday, November 14, 5:30 pm  
DOWNTOWN DINNER GROUP  
Meet Sally Phelps in the Main Street Lobby  
Capitol Lakes Retirement Center  
333 West Main St.—Free Parking across Street  
Sally Phelps, 251-4834  
[phelpssa@charter.net](mailto:phelpssa@charter.net)  
Priscilla Thain, 233-5578  
[priscillathain@gmail.com](mailto:priscillathain@gmail.com)

Monday, November 19, 7:00 pm  
MIDDLETON  
Community Room, Gardd Parc Condos  
6767 Frank Lloyd Wright Drive  
*Park behind the building; walk through the courtyard to lobby; ring the buzzer to #221, if the inside door is not open.*  
Diane de Vos, 836-0070; [djdevos@chorus.net](mailto:djdevos@chorus.net)

Tuesday, November 20, 12:45 pm  
TUESDAY AFTERNOON  
Helen Bruner's apartment, Apt. D91, 230-3642  
6225 Mineral Point Road  
Marie McCabe, 230-3536; [mmccabe4805@gmail.com](mailto:mmccabe4805@gmail.com)

Tuesday, November 20, 5:30 pm  
TUESDAY EVENING WEST  
(New Meeting Place and Time)  
Noodles Restaurant, University Ave.  
Marilyn Kupferberg, 271-1130; [joelmerkup@gmail.com](mailto:joelmerkup@gmail.com)

## Calendar

November 7 – 7:00 pm  
Forum: "Engaging in Civil Discourse"  
Capitol Lakes Grand Hall  
333 West Main St.

November 12  
Newsletter deadline  
[katiemulligan@yahoo.com](mailto:katiemulligan@yahoo.com)  
250-1896

November 14 – 1:00 pm  
LWVDC Board Meeting  
2712 Marshall Court, Suite 2

January 19 – 11:30 am  
Lively Issues Luncheon  
Madison Concourse Hotel  
"Cleaning up our Politics"  
Jay Heck, Common Cause  
Mike McCabe, Wisconsin Democracy Campaign

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## Early Voting

October 22 – November 2  
Check <https://myvote.wi.gov> for information on location of your municipal clerk.

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