



Bulletin

League of Women Voters® of Dane County, Inc.

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March 2014

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Presidents' Message

Kathy Fullin, fullin@execpc.com, 238-9465
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Recent efforts by the League at the local, state and national level have addressed issues that are known to have a disparate impact on individuals based on race. For instance, the League has devoted considerable resources trying, both financially and through the expenditure of volunteer time, to minimize barriers to voting.

Some barriers to voting tend to affect racial minorities more severely than other members of the community; in fact, this is the basis of the two lawsuits filed in Milwaukee in federal court to stop implementation of Wisconsin voter ID requirements. As noted in a report issued by the Employment and Training Institute at UW-Milwaukee (at www4.uwm.edu/eti/2007/VoterID.htm), voting age males of color are substantially less likely than voting age whites to have valid drivers' licenses, which is the principal form of ID envisioned by the currently enjoined state legislation. The League has also called on Congress to restore aspects of the Voting Rights Act that permit oversight of voting law changes that result in racially disparate impacts on voters.

In the City of Madison, considerable attention has been focused on racially disparate school outcomes - the "achievement gap" - and ways to combat it; upcoming school board elections may highlight this issue. The League has also been active on issues of juvenile justice, restoration of voting rights to felons, and other issues which tend to be associated with racial inequalities.

We know that poverty can result in poorer outcomes for children and families in many areas of interest to the League: health, education, juvenile and criminal justice, environmental justice, etc. The likelihood that low-income individuals and families can be disproportionately found among members of racial minorities suggests that we should become more knowledgeable about the status of people of color in Dane County. Fortunately, the Wisconsin Council on Children and Families, as part of its "Race to Equity Project," published "A Baseline Report on the State of Racial Disparities in Dane County." You can find it online at racetoequity.net. (Continued on page 2)

**The Spring Election is
 coming soon on
 April 1st!**

**Watch for
 Candidates' Answers
 in the
 March 20th Isthmus**

**Wednesday, March 5, 2014
 Issues Forum 7:00 pm**

Redistricting Reform

Carolyn Castore (Project Director for the LWVWI)
 Jay Heck (Director Common Cause of Wisconsin)
 John Hendrick (Dane County Board Supervisor)

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

Although much of the information in the report has been publicly available from other sources for some time, it is striking to see the pervasiveness and extremity of racial disparities in Dane County. For many measures (e.g., employment, poverty, child poverty, reading proficiency), African-Americans not only fare worse than other communities in Dane County, but also fare worse than most African-Americans throughout the United States. This information presents a stunningly different picture than many of us perhaps visualize when we think of Dane County.

We encourage you to examine the report and reflect on its potential implications as we look forward to future action on a variety of topics, including upcoming legislative action on the state budget and continued efforts to promote fair access to voting.

Lively Issues Luncheon

Lois Kiggins, Publicity Chair

On January 25, Co-President **Ingrid Rothe** welcomed members and guests who came out on a very cold day to the Lively Issues luncheon. She alerted members about two bills on the fast track in the Wisconsin Legislature, AB 603 and SB 459. The bills will require all citizens to show proof of residence when they register. Under current law, those registering during the open registration period do not have to show proof of residence; the city clerk verifies the residence. These bills will make it more difficult for the League's Special Registration Deputies to register voters, and will result in fewer registrations.

In addition to contacting local legislators, she asked members to think about friends who live in other Dane County districts; they could ask their legislators to oppose these bills, and other bills that may infringe on voting rights. Although we don't usually think of these Dane County districts because they lie mostly outside of Dane County, they do have some Dane County constituents. The legislators are: Scott Fitzgerald, 13th Senate, John Jagler, 37th Assembly, Joel Kleefisch, 38th Assembly, Luther Olson, 14th Senate, Keith Ripp, 42nd Assembly, Tim Cullen, 15th Senate, and Andy Jorgenson, 43rd Assembly.

Ingrid Rothe congratulated **Kathy Johnson** on her service as Program Director for the 2013-2014 Issues Forums. Kathy Johnson acknowledged a grant from the Joyce Foundation. **Carol Kiemel** presented the Outstanding Service Award to Chris Kane, Service Director of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul. Carol Kiemel started the League's voter registration tables at Fish Hatchery Road with Chris Kane's advice and help.

Chris Kane described the services the Society provides with profits from six thrift stores in the area. At Fish Hatchery they serve 2000 people monthly with the help of 35 volunteers. One of the programs, providing prescription vouchers, has proved to be so popular and costly that St Vincent has opened its own pharmacy. He said the Affordable Care Act (ACA) has been helpful in controlling the cost and he praised the League volunteers who provided ACA information at the voter registration sites.

The guest speaker was Colleen Jo Winston, Director of Victim Services & Programs, State of Wisconsin. She left a career in social work to serve with the Department of Corrections (DOC). Since her appointment as the office's first director in 2000, she has expanded and enhanced the services provided to victims. Winston's office provides more than 16,000 notifications to victims each year about offender custody status changes and offers personal assistance and advocacy to crime victims. A major component of the services offered is restorative justice.

Restorative justice in the DOC is a way of looking at crime that involves victims and the community to a higher degree than traditional approaches. Rather than simply punishing the offender, restorative justice addresses the actual direct harm that occurred as a result of the crime as well as the ripple effects that often span out to include victims, victims' families, offenders' families, businesses and the community.

Winston showed a clip demonstrating a victim impact class. It was an opportunity for the offenders to hear from actual victims about the impact of their crime on the lives of victims and the community, and the realization that the impact doesn't diminish over time.

The right to vote, even in federal elections, is determined at the state level. In Wisconsin, convicted felons cannot vote until they have served their sentence, and are off paper. Incarcerated people can vote in Wisconsin by absentee ballot, as long as they are not serving a sentence for a felony.

Saving the Great Lakes

Katie Mulligan

Speakers at the February 5 Issues forum, "The Future of the Great Lakes," offered a daunting list of threats to the lakes and followed up with specific action steps League members could take. The speakers also described an impressive record of League advocacy extending back several decades. (Continued on page 3)

Caryl Terrell, member of the LWWWI Water Position Committee, opened the meeting with a quote from a 1956-57 League pamphlet that encouraged protection of water quality and other aspects of the environment. New advocacy efforts are being spearheaded by the Lake Michigan League of Women Voters (LMLWV), made up of 60 member Leagues in four states. The LMLWV is working to implement Great Lakes Restoration bills, with a particular focus on restoring water quality, preventing and controlling invasive species, cleaning up toxic pollution and mitigating the impacts of global warming on the Great Lakes.

Art Palleon, former LWWWI Delegate to the LMLWV, argued in a previous presentation that, "The Great Lakes Collaboration Implementation Act of 2009 provides manageable solutions to problems." It could result in the creation of numerous jobs and the generation of \$50 billion in long-term economic benefits. More information about the LMLWV is available at: lakemichiganlww.wordpress.com/about.

LWWWI members have also been at work developing a water position to be presented at the LWWWI 2014 convention in Appleton. The full statement, available in the study materials, emphasizes a holistic approach of "whole basin management" that includes land and watersheds that drain to wetlands, rivers and other bodies of water. The position also supports reaffirming the Great Lakes Compact, which limits unnatural diversions of water from the Great Lakes Basin.

Shahla Werner, Director of the Sierra Club, John Muir Chapter in Wisconsin, provided specific examples of the operation of the Compact and encouraged League members to guard against any weakening of its provisions. She pointed out that the Great Lakes, while subjected to serious threats to its viability, is also vital to the area's economy and environment. More than 1.5 million jobs are directly connected to the Great Lakes, generating \$62 billion in wages.

Voter Services

Gail Bliss, Voter Services Chair

Dane County has new voting machines! The 'complete the arrow' machines are gone; now we have 'fill in the oval' - like standardized tests. A major difference between the old machines and the new ones is that it makes the same noise each time a ballot is inserted. So, each voter is responsible for watching the screen and seeing if the machine says "You are finished. Thank you for voting." Please spread the word.

The Madison City Clerk has issued the following directions when using the new DS200:

1. Mark the oval next to your choice using a black or blue ballpoint pen. To cast write-in votes, mark the oval next to the write-in space, then print the candidate's name.
2. Insert your ballot into the DS200. Your ballot can be tabulated in any orientation (right side up, backward, or upside down).
3. Wait to see "Thank you for voting!" appear on the screen. This is your confirmation that your ballot has been counted.

For the first time in many years, there were no primaries in the city of Madison. Only seven of the 37 Dane County Board of Supervisors district elections are contested, and only two (#28 Cross Plains and #22 DeForest) had primaries February 18, 2014. The other contested County Board races are: #5 Downtown Madison, #21 Sun Prairie, #27 Fitchburg, #30 Western Dane County and #32 Verona.

Special deputy voter registration will continue until 5:00 p.m. on March 12, 2014.

Our belated thanks to the following League members who registered voters in September and October at the Westside Community Farmers market: **Edith First, Myrna McNatt, Barbara Mortensen, and Priscilla Thain.**

Contributions

Between December 18 and January 24, the following people contributed to our league. Thank you!

Mary Conroy

Paul Kaarakka

Peggy Lemahieu

Dennis & Mary Ray

Mr. & Mrs. M.G. Singer

Mark & Sarah Sundquist

Marcella Worzala

Karen Goebel

Doug Knudson

Linda Olson

Amy Schultz & Dave Welo

Miriam Simmons & James Cain

Sandra Wolens

In Memory of **Patricia Watkins:**

Ariel Ford

Birthday Fund:

John Koch

Edith T. Sullivan

Merilyn Kupferberg

Merilyn Kupferberg

New Members

Welcome new members – **Jeanne Bissell, Beverly Blahnick, Mary Brod, Janine Edwards, Barbara Feeney, Susan Fulks, Rita Kades, Alicia Lux, Mary Metz, Christine Milligan-Ciha, Mildred Moffett, Marilyn Mussallem and Mary Rodriguez.**

We are happy to have you join our League.

50 Year Members

At our annual meeting in May, we honor any members who have belonged to the League for 50 years. We do our best to keep our records up-to-date, but to be sure that we don't miss anyone, we ask that you contact the League office if this year marks your 50-year anniversary with the League or if you know of any members in our League who reached their 50-year anniversary this year.

Thank You, Volunteers!

We'd like to thank the following members for providing administrative assistance and help with mailing Candidates' Answers request letters to candidates:

Cathy Berndt

Gail Bliss

Joanne Elder

Gail Krc

Joan Lundin

Ingrid Rothe

Joanie Kanter for her work in the layout of this bulletin.

Frances Bicknell

Maggie Dugan

Melissa Keyes

Pat Levin

Myrna McNatt

Edith Sullivan

Know Your Board Member

Gail Bliss, Voter Services Chair

After 24 years as a Capital Budget Analyst with the Wisconsin Department of Administration, I retired in January 2008. From 2005 – 2008 I attended MATC to become a Certified Occupational Therapy Assistant. I planned to work short-term jobs around the country, but after my son completed his Marine Corps service, he and his wife moved back to Madison. Now, I work part-time with the Activities Department at Capital Lakes and as a sub in the Rehab Department at Skaalen Retirement.

I am a lifelong Madison resident. My house felt too big for one person, so this year I am renting a room to a young woman from Japan who works for a Japanese NGO on Japanese/American relations.

In the fall of 2008, I joined a PLATO class on International Affairs, and learned of the LWVDC Great Decisions discussion group. I attended in February and March of 2009, and joined the League. The next year, I found myself organizing the Great Decisions group.

The Nominating Committee then asked me to be Fundraising Chair 2010-2012. In December of 2011 we received a \$5,000 grant from the Evjue Foundation to assist Dane County residents obtain documents needed to get a Wisconsin DOT issued ID in order to be able to vote. Thanks to court decisions on challenges to the ID law, the issue of Voter ID became less time critical, but still important. I officially switched from Fundraising to Voter Services in July 2012.

Through work on Voter ID, I have become more involved in issues of homelessness. Through my church, I have served meals at the Porchlight men's shelter, and volunteered at "The Road Home" (a transition program for homeless families) for several years, but the work with homeless individuals needing ID deepened my commitment to this issue.

Since 2008, I've been doing more camping and biking and cross country skiing. I belong to 2 book discussion groups, and am addicted to public radio, Sudoku and Free Cell. I take a Road Scholar trip or two each year. I also sing in the choir at First Unitarian Society.

March 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. Find a meeting that is convenient for you and participate! Please let the host know that you plan to attend.

MONDAY, MARCH 17, 2014

Monday Evening West - 5:30 pm

Panera, 3416 University Ave.

Merilyn Kupferberg, 831-3267, joelmerkup@gmail.com
Barbara Mortensen, 233-7563, morten21@att.net

Middleton - 7:00 pm

Gardd Parc Condos

6767 Frank Lloyd Wright Drive

Park behind the building; walk through the courtyard to lobby; ring buzzer to #221, if the inside door is not open.

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

TUESDAY, MARCH 18, 2014

Tuesday Afternoon - 12:45 pm

Oakwood West, Oaks A-4

Parking on grounds or in P1 Heritage Oaks Parking Ramp

Marie McCabe, 230-3536, mmccabe4805@gmail.com

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 19, 2014

Northeastside - 3:30 pm

Lakeview Public Library

2845 N. Sherman Ave.

Helen LeRoy, recording, 244-2377, haleroy@wisc.edu

Dorothy Wheeler, 244-4711, dorothywheeler@tds.net

Downtown Dinner Group - 5:30 pm

Capitol Lakes Retirement Center

Restaurant "The Seasons"

333 West Main St. - Free parking across street

Sally Phelps, 251-4834, phelpssa@charter.net

In Memoriam

Our League recently lost two long-time members – **Pat Watkins** and **Mary Lou Munts**.

Priscilla Thain and **Sara Markham** share memories of **Pat Watkins**.

Longtime League member **Pat Watkins** passed away on December 12, 2013 at 84 years young. Pat served as the chair of the Downtown Discussion Dinner group for many years and was a tireless advocate for a fair judicial system, serving on several city committees that worked to advance jury diversity. Pat was interested in music, art, travel, theater and books and was a strong voice for the public library system. A member of the Prairie Unitarian Society, she served on their board of directors, and arranged her well known bus trips to art exhibits in Chicago, Milwaukee, and Grand Rapids Michigan, to name a few. After graduating from college, she taught High School English in New Jersey. As a young widow, she went to work for the US Armed Forces Institute in Germany. Later she was Assistant Director of Admissions at UW-Madison in charge of the SOAR program until she retired. Pat became the first African American to chair the UW Roundtable Luncheon and the first African American regional director of the Junior Science, Engineering & Humanities Symposium in Wisconsin. Pat was a member of many service groups, including the NAACP, the Urban League, the North East Senior Coalition Ethnic Diversity Committee and the Civics Club. She was a strong supporter of the Odyssey Program and the Women’s Medical Fund.

Pat contributed significantly as well to the work of LWVDC over many years. Members may remember Pat’s leadership in conducting a ground-breaking, survey-evidence-driven LWVDC study on Dane County jury selection of visible minorities in the 1990’s. Others may remember her efforts in organizing arrangements for key LWVDC events. Because she knew the owners of an office building on Marshall Court, Pat facilitated LWVDC’s relocation in 1997 from the former E. Dayton Street basement office to the current Marshall Court office, believing that LWVDC members and employees should have accessible, quality-level office space that would also lend credibility to the public face of the organization in the community. In recent years she assisted LWVDC in broadening its understanding of disability when searching for accessible locations for its gatherings. Pat regularly attended LWVDC forums and events, contributing questions and comments pertinent to the issues at hand.

Alert and spirited to the end, Pat played bridge with her bridge buddies at Agrace the week before she passed away. She leaves a daughter, Leslie Watkins.

Members may share memories at CressFuneralService.com. A memorial service is planned for Saturday, May 3 at 11 am at the First Unitarian Society, 900 University Bay Drive, Madison. A tree will be planted there in her memory.

* * * * *

Fran Bicknell and **Connie Threinen** (with **Bill** and **Joan Burns**, **Peg Davey** and **June Weisberger Blanchard**) shared memories of **Mary Lou Munts**.

Mary Lou Munts passed away in December 2013. She was a long-time member of the Dane County League of Women Voters. Mary Lou joined the League partly because her mother had been an active member in the early years after women won the right to vote. She also cared about many of “our issues” and had worked on Fair Housing in the D.C. area before she moved back to Madison.

Mary Lou chose to be active in partisan politics and was elected to the Wisconsin Assembly in 1972. Her first actions in the legislature were reforms for those in need of protection and guardianship. Her guardianship reform bill pioneered the concept of limited guardianship for those able to exercise some of their rights. She required guardians to report to the court on the “well-being of the person” as well as the required report on the property of the ward. She chaired a Special Committee on Chronic Mental Illness and sponsored many reforms to assure better funding for Community Services, an increase in the state supplement for SSI, anti-discrimination protections for all persons with disabilities, and improved legal procedures for those who are incompetent to stand trial. Mary Lou then turned her attention to issues of water quality and control of toxic substances. She had many successes as she worked “across the aisle” with Republican co-sponsors of many of her bills. Most of her bills had League consensus and support!

Mary Lou Munts did not run for the Assembly on a women’s rights platform but, once elected, she began working with feminist advocates to remove discriminatory elements in the state’s statutes. After early successes in advancing women’s rights in laws concerning the age of marriage, the delivering of newspapers, the listing of job openings, and school curricula, advocates focused their attention on the family law statutes. Mary Lou led the effort to create and adopt a “No-fault divorce” system. The next step for the advocates was the examination of property rights in marriage. They recognized the need for significant legal expertise and leadership within the Legislature and again turned to Mary Lou. Aided by law professors, law students, and lawyers throughout the state, Mary Lou became the leader of a decade-long struggle to achieve the Marital Property Law, making Wisconsin a “community property” state. (League of Women Voters members were among the strongest advocates for the change.)

In June 1977, Mary Lou led a workshop at the Wisconsin Women’s State meeting where she was one of 19 Wisconsin women elected to represent the state at the first National Women’s Conference that was held in Houston in November 1977.

Mary Lou became the first woman to serve as co-chair of the Joint Committee on Finance. She was appointed to the Public Service Commission by Governor Earl in 1984 and became the first woman to chair the PSC in 1986!

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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



Great Decisions Program

Edith Sullivan

This program, created and distributed by the Foreign Policy Association (FPA), focuses on discussion of global issues facing the United States and encourages participants to make public policy recommendations.

Each year the FPA selects eight critical topics and publishes "briefing books" and a DVD for use by discussion groups. These resources include background information for each topic, pose some questions to consider, and list some additional resources to consult. This year the topics are: Defense Technology; Israel and the US; Turkey's Challenges; Islamic Awakening; Energy Independence; Food and Climate; China's Foreign Policy; and US Trade Policy.

We meet at the Central Library on Thursday afternoons, January 30-March 26, for 2 hours. Most participants select one of the topics and lead the discussion of that issue. We start by watching the DVD then launch into our discussion of the topic which can be fairly wide-ranging as people bring in additional information and viewpoints. We discuss and answer the questions posed in the briefing book.

Finally, we complete opinion ballots. The FPA compiles the results from all participating groups and prepares a Report that it distributes to the White House, Departments of State and Defense, members of Congress and the media.

Seeking Board Members

LEADERSHIP (noun) - "the position or function of a leader... to provide guidance and direction..." LWVDC's 2014 Nominating Committee is seeking members who will consider providing leadership on the board. Contact Diane Adams (dadams@wisc.edu), Mary Bean (marybean@charter.net) or Gail Shea (gshea@chorus.net) if you will consider stepping up for nomination!

Upcoming Events Calendar

- **March 5** – Issues Forum: *Redistricting*, 7 pm
- **March 19** – LWVDC Board Meeting, 1:00 pm
- **April 2** – Issues Forum, *Homeless Children*, 7 pm
- **April 16** – LWVDC Board Meeting, 1:00 pm
- **May 7** – Annual Meeting – 6:30 pm