



Bulletin

League of Women Voters® of Dane County, Inc.

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Office hours: Monday–Thursday, 9–1

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President's Message

Forward.

It is Wisconsin's motto, and I am always grateful for and inspired by the energy and commitment of our members and supporters as we move our community forward.

In 2018, we face four statewide elections. Our voter service volunteers are geared up to help voters around the county with information about voter ID and how to register. Whether engaging high school students through our partnership with Inspire US, working with the UW–Madison student government, ASM, on the Big Ten Voting Challenge, empowering librarians to assist patrons

with voting issues, or working with food pantry clients, our League has boots on the ground. Our candidate forum moderators are already being booked, and our *Candidates' Answers* team is ready to go.

As you will read inside, our members have also been successfully advocating with local governments on issues from sustainability to community mental health services. This winter, we are again encouraging members to engage with their government by attending meetings in person or remotely.

Financially, it has also been a good year. New members, generous donors, and an expanding stock market have helped us keep up with our costs. Some uncertainties loom ahead. Will the changes to tax law lead to decreased charitable giving? The "affordable housing" crisis affects our search for a new office, as we expect that our landlord, Ronald McDonald House, will begin construction on their new building within a few years. The rental market is tight and expensive, especially for a central location that includes parking.

I do see other challenges ahead. Our membership, which grew phenomenally in 2017, is very homogeneous. In 2018 we must prioritize increasing our diversity (age, race, ethnicity, gender, economic status). We will have an article in the January 8th edition of the *Capitol City Hues* newspaper, which I hope will be a first step in developing more partnerships with diverse community groups. If you haven't read *Hues*, you are missing a Madison treasure. The newspaper is available free in many of the same newsstands where you see *Isthmus* or *La Comunidad*. For \$35 you can have it mailed to your home. The paper is also [online](#). In the *Hues*, I learn about remarkable people I don't normally cross paths with and events I don't read about in the *Wisconsin State Journal*. And it helps me to question why that is.

Another challenge before us is developing new leaders to serve on our board. I hope that anyone with time, talent, and enthusiasm who is willing to serve will not be shy about making yourself known to our [nominating committee](#). We are volunteer-powered! You will be mentored.

Together, our League will move forward in 2018: empowering voters, defending democracy.

Brook Soltvedt, soltvedtbrook@gmail.com, 608-274-5184

Library Liaisons Expand Our Voter Outreach

Marian Matthews, matthm2@charter.net

The opportunities for voter education and outreach in Wisconsin changed in 2017. Historically, Special Registration Deputies (SRDs) often took the lead in organizing events to register voters and provide information about voter ID. With the state's elimination of the SRD role, however, the LWVDC Voter Service Committee brainstormed ideas to ensure that citizens continue to have ways to learn about voting. A renewed focus on the role libraries could play seemed like a great place to start.



Libraries in the city of Madison have a history of voter education and assistance. For many years, librarians served as SRDs. In addition, Madison libraries hosted registration events called *Check Out Voting*, and last year Madison libraries were designated as authorized locations for city voter registration. With the success of these activities in the Madison libraries, the Voter Service Committee decided to try to expand these efforts to libraries throughout Dane County.

Members of the Voter Service Committee started by creating a *library kit* with suggestions for how libraries could work on voter education. This evolved into a *ladder of engagement* with levels of increasing involvement by library staff. At level 1, a library would make informational materials such as LWVDC bookmarks available to all patrons. At level 2, the library would offer a bookmark to all patrons who apply for a library card or change their address and explain a bit about registration procedures. Progressing up the ladder, library staff would offer the use of the library's computers, printers, and copiers to facilitate voter registration. At the top level, library staff would work with the municipal clerk and municipal governing body to have their library designated a voter registration location, similar to the arrangement in the City of Madison.

To help support this work, members of the League and the Dane County Voter ID Coalition who live in communities around Dane County are being recruited to serve as *library liaisons*. The liaisons have begun to meet with library directors to introduce the project and encourage participation. We are hoping to recruit liaisons for all the libraries and still need volunteers for the following communities: Belleville, Black Earth, Deerfield, Marshall, Mazomanie, McFarland, and Waunakee. If you know a Voter Education Ambassador who lives in one of those communities and who might be interested in working with their library, please contact me.

We expect to receive many requests to moderate candidate forums this year, and we would like to increase the depth of our field of experienced moderators.

If you are interested, please contact Priscilla Thain, priscillathain@gmail.com, 608-233-5578.

Madison Police Department Study

Mary Anglim, mtanglim@gmail.com, and Kathleen Fullin, kathyfullin@gmail.com



CITY OF MADISON POLICE DEPARTMENT

The City of Madison received the results of a study of the policies, procedures, culture, and training of the Madison Police Department on December 14th. The LWV Dane County testified in favor of contracting for the study and has been monitoring its progress. OIR Group, a California firm, was chosen to conduct the study at a cost of \$400,000.

OIR recommends more robust efforts to engage the community in MPD policies and activities to improve public confidence in its operations. Examples include a formalized process to gather public comment on proposed policies and rules, the selection of specialized officers, the promotion process, and strategic planning; a more intensive use of University of Wisconsin resources; more transparent information about critical incidents; and a more accessible, less formal complaint process for low-level conflicts.

OIR also noted that positive policing techniques—problem-solving and de-escalation—are hard to document but should be recognized and rewarded no less than traditional police activity such as crime investigation, counts of shots fired, and arrests. Annual personnel evaluations should be reinstated and used to reinforce positive feedback to officers. According to OIR, MPD excels in hiring and training a diverse work force, but it needs to be sure that the experiences of officers reflect that commitment by providing opportunities for meaningful, confidential input.

OIR endorses civilian control of police departments. To enhance this control and supplement the work of the Police and Fire Commission, OIR recommends creating a professional auditor position to gather and share data, receive citizen complaints, and monitor internal disciplinary reviews and implementation of approved study recommendations.

A [one-page summary of OIR's recommendations](#) is available on the City Council website. This summary does not do justice to the variety and depth of ideas touched on in OIR's full report, which contains 146 recommendations. Thorough study of the report will take several months. The Ad Hoc Committee, the City Council, and others will be briefed on the report on Thursday, January 11th, at 6 p.m. in Room 201, City-County Building. The public is welcome, but no public testimony will be taken at this briefing.

The Police Department will provide a response to the report by January 31st, and the Ad Hoc Committee will meet several more times to prepare recommendations to the Common Council. Madison City Channel will continue to make these meetings available on-line and they are well worth viewing. You can find them by clicking on "Special Meeting" on [this Madison City Channel page](#).

Please notify our office if your name, mailing address, or email address changes. It will save us postal charges and ensure you are kept informed about League activities. Thank you!

Winter Voter Outreach at St. Vincent de Paul

Betty Cohen, bettycohen3@gmail.com

Our outreach table will be set up in the waiting room at the St. Vincent de Paul (SVdP) food pantry from **January 8th –29th** to prepare SVdP clients for the February and April elections.

Volunteers can [click here to sign up](#) for one or more 2-hour shifts on Monday, Tuesday, or Friday mornings (10:30–12:30), Thursday afternoons (2:30–4:30), and Saturday mornings (9:30–11:30). If you are new to SVdP outreach, we'll try to pair you with an experienced volunteer. On **Wednesday morning, January 10th, from 10–11:30**, we'll have an orientation at SVdP for new volunteers or those who would like a refresher on the latest voter ID information. [Click here to sign up for the orientation.](#)



Voter Ambassador Training is highly recommended for SVdP volunteers. The next offering is Tuesday, January 16, from 3:00–4:30pm.

Contact me for more information about volunteering at SVdP: bettycohen3@gmail.com.

If you find something interesting in the *Bulletin*, [share this link](#) with a friend!

We Appreciate Your Donations of Time and Money!

From stuffing envelopes to organizing name tags and other supplies for forums, our office volunteers help us serve you. If you'd like to help, email office@lwvvdanecounty.org. These members helped in October and November.

Mary Bean	Jesse Kehres
Gail Bliss	Joan Lundin
Kathy Fullin	Jan Van Vleck
Eileen Hanneman	

Financial contributions beyond membership dues keep our work going! Thank you to these members and supporters who made additional donations in October and November!

Claire Box	Karen McKim
Joann Elder	Guy Plunkett III
Emy Gartzke	Caryl Terrell
Peggy Glassford	
Helen L. Horn and Ralph Petersen	

Welcome, New Members!

In October and November we were joined by:

Elizabeth Alleman	Rebecca Hodgson
Vincent Borkowski	Jane Kaldor
Mary K. Dick	Marta Meyers
Sarah Gavac	Sara Woolery

League Members' Efforts Impact County Decisions

Kathleen Fullin, kathyfullin@gmail.com

Thanks to all members who contacted their county board supervisors during the last five months to urge support for efforts to (a) improve mental health services, (b) divert from the jail people needing mental health or alcohol and other drug abuse services, and (c) provide help to those needing voter photo ID.

After more than a year of discussion, the County Board voted to approve \$78 million to remodel the existing jail and to close the Ferris Center as well as the jail cells in the City County Building. It was not immediately apparent that our efforts and those of other advocacy groups to divert some resources to alternatives to incarceration were having an impact. But the final 2018 budget included a number of changes that advance our advocacy goals:

- A \$100,000 item to review existing mental health services was proposed by County Executive Parisi. The County Board increased funding to \$140,000 to include the study of the population's demographic characteristics affecting the need for a Crisis Restoration Facility. The amendment explicitly noted that the study should respond to concerns that inadequate mental health services result in incarceration of people needing treatment. The study will examine the feasibility of a Mental Health Crisis Restoration Facility and review the recommendations of a 2015 community workgroup on mental health and jail diversion.
- The County Board committed to completing the initial data collection for a study of pretrial services and planning for a full pretrial services office. Although no extra money was allocated, the County Board urged the creation of a pilot bail review process to better identify persons who cannot pay low bail amounts, but who should be released from jail pending trial.
- About \$15,000 was allocated for a consultant to work with the Criminal Justice Council data research team to identify national best practices for strategies to stop the revolving door for people who frequently commit low-level crimes after their release from jail.
- \$85,500 was added to the Early Childhood Zone program for Sun Prairie and the Leopold School area. The program provides mental health assessments and interventions for young children.
- Funding for Partners in Equity was increased from \$15,000 to \$65,000. This program awards grants to community groups to address systemic racial inequities in health, education, employment, or criminal justice.
- A small step was taken to make it more likely that any surpluses in the human services fund would be retained for human services in the next year.
- \$5,000 was added to increase public engagement in county decision-making. This is a substantial reduction from the proposal supported by the League to make video recordings of all Dane County Standing Committee meetings available to the public. Discussion in the Executive Committee indicated that members are interested in working on more public education about county government issues.
- The Board allocated \$10,000 to the County Clerk's office for voter photo ID services and agreed to work with the County Clerk to identify additional funding. This is a reduction from the \$25,000 initially proposed and supported by the League.



Drop In on Your Government This Winter

Mary Anglim, membership@lwvदानecounty.org

Last February the Dane County League encouraged members to choose one or two local government meetings to attend and to report on in February Unit meetings. That was such an interesting experience that we are repeating it again this year, with a few tweaks.

- **How to find meetings.** On our website, you'll find [a list of times and locations of a number meetings](#) we think members may be interested in attending in January and February. The page is updated regularly as meetings are scheduled. Our weekly member update will include suggestions about interesting meetings coming up each week.
- **No need to go out in the snow!** Many City and County meetings are videorecorded and can be watched on cable tv, or viewed on demand on your computer, tablet, or cell phone. Details are on our website. You can also [sign up to receive the Weekly Viewer Guide from Madison City Channel](#). So whether you are on vacation in a warm place, or huddled at home during a frigid icy spell in Madison, you can still be engaged. Invite a friend to "attend" with you!
- **Report on your experience.** Unit leaders have decided not to meet in February, but we can still share our experiences with government. [We have developed an online reporting form](#). Take a look at it before you attend a meeting. Then complete the form online after the meeting. We hope to hear from many of you about your experience. Let's talk about how citizens experience government meetings: Is it easy to get the agenda? Is lighting and audio adequate? Did you feel able to ask a question or to register to testify if you wished to do so? What improvements would have helped? We'll report back to elected representatives to let them know their constituents are watching!
- **Write a letter to the editor.** Did something you saw or heard at a meeting impress you, in a positive or negative way? Share your informed view with tens of thousands of readers of the *Wisconsin State Journal*, *Capitol Times*, or other local paper. Just remember—when you write, do not speak for the League. If you need more encouragement, the *WSJ*'s opinion editor, [Scott Milfred, provides it here](#).
- **Tour the Dane County Jail.** As part of our visits to local government, I will arrange a tour of the jail in February for interested members. [Please email me if you are interested](#). Depending on availability of jail staff, I will arrange the tour 2 or 3 weeks in advance.

2018 Elections

February 20 Nonpartisan primary

April 3 Spring election

August 14 Fall primary

November 6 Fall election

Encouraging informed and active participation in government since 1920.

Sustainability: A Framework of Support for Present and Future Generations

Mike Casey, bulletin@lwvdanecounty.org

The November issues forum focused on the sustainability efforts to which communities and citizens across the county have committed over the past decade to foster environmental, economic, and social resilience. The three panelists represented three elements of the larger community, each of which is making great strides toward achieving their shared long-term goals. These goals include a highly skilled, forward-reaching capacity in Dane County; an extremely active results-driven citizen effort in many cities and towns, including Middleton; and a solid commitment to collaborating across local government boundaries, benefiting those who have chosen to participate, including Fitchburg, Monona, and others who are feeling the demands of a growing metropolitan area.

Lisa MacKinnon is Dane County's first Sustainability and Program Evaluation Coordinator. Since 2012, when she was hired, she worked with the County Board to adopt a [Sustainable Operations Plan](#). MacKinnon, county staff, and a citizens' committee have used this plan collaboratively to improve the sustainability of county operations and the county at large. Plan categories include: Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation; Transportation and Vehicle Fleet; Water; Waste; County Building and Facilities; Purchasing; Education and Outreach; and Employee Experience. She noted special efforts to include social and racial equity as critical elements in creating a healthy community over the longer term.



Spencer Schumacher, a Realtor and Middleton's Sustainability Committee Chairperson, described the sustainability activities Middleton has undertaken over the past ten years. The impressive list included adoption of the Sustainable City Plan, which has led to improvements in solar capacity in city operations, retail, and residential development, the addition of community gardens, replacing street lights with LED bulbs and concrete walkways with permeable brick pavers, and opening a city recycling center. In collaboration with Citizens Climate Lobby, the committee got two climate change referendum questions on their ballot last year. Both questions passed overwhelmingly. Schumacher demonstrated that Middleton values considering sustainability in decision-making.

Erica Kluetmeier, Fitchburg Sustainability Specialist, stressed the value of being a Green Tier Legacy Community. Municipalities and counties in this consortium benefit from the leadership of statewide partner organizations including the DNR, 1000 Friends of Wisconsin, League of Municipalities, UW COWS, Wisconsin Counties Association, WECC, and the WI Office of Energy Innovation. Members share technical expertise, collaborate in training, and leverage the experience of other planners and administrators around the state to help them win grant support for projects.



Together, the speakers provided an outstanding overview of local commitment to foster environmental, economic, and social resilience for the future.

You can see their presentation slides, listen to a podcast of the forum, or watch a recording of their presentations [on our website](#).

Unit Meetings

Unit Coordinator, Diane Martin Liebert, dwliebert@gmail.com, 608-698-4143

League members typically meet in one of four units to discuss the topic of that month's Issues Forum, using study materials provided by the program planners. Please let the host know that you plan to attend.

Thirty-four members and five guests attended the October unit meetings, discussing [*The Crisis in Wisconsin's Education K-12 Funding*](#). Themes across the units included (a) the value schools play as a focal point in a community, (b) the need to recognize the special costs that differentiate schools (e.g., transportation, special needs) across the state, and (c) the ability to provide the curriculum necessary to maintain our democracy and meet the job requirements of the current and future economy.

Twenty-seven members attended the November unit meetings, discussing [*Sustainability: A Framework of Support for Present and Future Generations*](#). Units found the topic relevant and the presentations helpful, noting that sustainability needs continuous monitoring. All units mentioned the need for increased public transportation, particularly in rural areas. Units noted the importance of having good air quality and clean water. Reports included suggestions to reuse brown water (e.g., water plants with used bath water) and to employ the standard "3Rs"—reuse, reduce, recycle.

The Northeast Side unit will meet February 20th at 3:30 at Lakeview Library. Other unit leaders have decided not to meet in February. Instead, please report your participation with local government, as described in the article on page 6 of this *Bulletin*. The usual schedule will resume with unit meetings after our March forum.

Third Tuesday Oakwood West

March 20, 12:45 pm

B39 The Oaks, 6205 Mineral Point Rd., Madison
Park on grounds or in P1 Heritage Oaks Ramp
Nancy Simonsen, 230-3014, njsimonsen@gmail.com
Kathy Johnson, 238-1785, kjohnson44@ameritech.net

Third Wednesday Northeast Side

March 21, 3:30 pm

Lakeview Public Library
2845 N. Sherman Ave., Madison
Dorothy Wheeler, 244-4711, dorothywheeler@tds.net

Third Wednesday Downtown Dinner

March 21, 5:15 pm

Capitol Lakes private dining room
333 West Main St., Madison; Free parking in ramp
Ingrid Rothe, 556-3174, irothe@ssc.wisc.edu

Third Monday West/Middleton

March 26, 6:00 pm

Gardd Parc Community Room
6767 Frank L. Wright Ave., Middleton
Priscilla Thain, 233-5578, priscillathain@gmail.com
Barbara Mortensen, 233-7563, barbaramort@charter.net



Happy New Year!

Photo by [Joseph Chan](#) on [Unsplash](#)

Lively Issues Luncheon
Saturday, January 20, 2018
Impact of the ACA in Wisconsin: Looking Ahead



Bobby Peterson
Executive Director, ABC for Health, Inc.

11:15 am Registration outside the Grand Hall
11:45 am Luncheon in The Seasons Restaurant (lower level)
12:45 pm Grand Hall, Voter Service Award and our speaker

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

Upcoming Events

- Jan. 04 [High School Voter Education Committee](#), 2:00 pm
(Sequoia Library, Study Rooms A&B)
- Jan. 06 [Voter Education Ambassador Training](#), 5:00 pm
- Jan. 10 LWVDC Board Meeting, 2:30 pm
- Jan. 11 Deadline for the office to receive reservations for the
[Lively Issues Luncheon](#)
- Jan. 11 [Orientation](#) for new voter outreach volunteers (or
those wanting a refresher) at St. Vincent de Paul food
pantry, 10 am (2033 Fish Hatchery Rd.)
- Jan. 15 Office closed for Martin Luther King Day
- Jan. 20 Lively Issues Luncheon, 11:15 am (Capitol Lakes)
[Impact of the ACA on Wisconsin: Looking Ahead](#)
- Jan. 29 Special Voter Education Ambassador Training for the
Dane County Voter ID Coalition, 5:30 pm (Madison
Police South Station, 825 Hughes Pl.)
- Jan. 30 Primary edition of *Candidates' Answers* available on
our website.
- Feb. 14 LWVDC Board Meeting, 2:30 pm

Officers

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*Watch your email each Monday for a weekly update from LWV Dane County
with a roundup of action alerts and upcoming events.*