



Bulletin

League of Women Voters® of Dane County, Inc.

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May 2021

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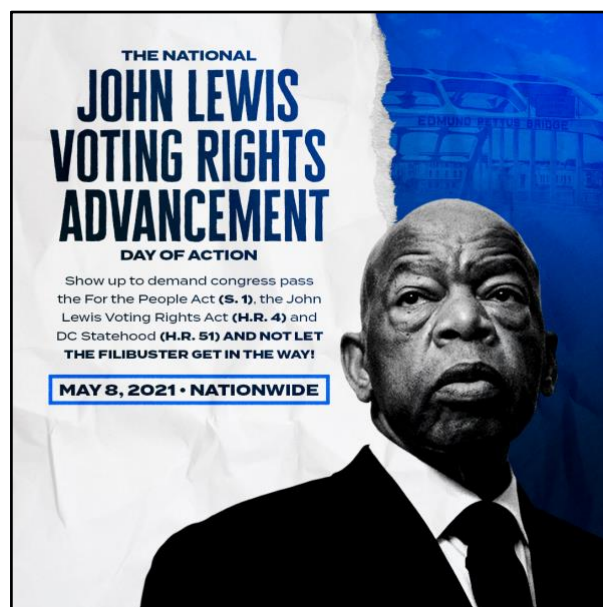
President's Message

Christine Clements, president@lwvdanecounty.org

The month of April, along with the mutability of spring weather in Wisconsin, brought the celebration of our 51st Earth Day and a climate summit of global leaders, the Chauvin guilty verdict and more killings of young Black Americans, a wave of mass shootings and police reform initiatives, continued violence against Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders and increased calls for allyship, additional voter suppression initiatives and the Wisconsin Supreme Court decision to stop the purge of voters from the registration rolls, infrastructure initiatives and budget discussions. In the midst of these often

Upcoming Action:

May 8: John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement
Action Day in Madison – [Details and RSVP](#)



conflicting events and outcomes, it is a challenge to navigate and prioritize our commitments to action. There's much to be done.

At our last board meeting, executive director Kate Vickery led the LWVDC Board of Directors in a "groupbrain" discussion about the value of League membership. I've been thinking about this over the past several weeks as the news has continued to roll out, and it's become clear to me that the main reason I joined the League of Women Voters is the agency it provides in the midst of a challenging, political world. Civic engagement is critical to making necessary systemic change and League membership provides a valuable portal to meaningful civic engagement. April was national volunteer month, and it would be difficult to find a more diligent group of volunteers committed to working for positive change than our League members. Through its members, the League has an impact and makes a difference, engaging in action and advocacy to address the challenges to democracy and social justice.

The local League has had good and bad news recently. On the positive side, we are wrapping up preparations for our annual meeting. By now you should have received the directors' annual reports of the year's many accomplishments, the ballot for 2021-2022, and the ballot support documents. **We hope you will [join us at the May 6th Q&A](#) to get any questions you have answered, and on June 2nd for the Annual Membership Meeting ([register online](#)).**

In less happy news and due to health concerns, Fund Development Director Linda Dietrich has had to step away from her leadership role. We are very grateful for Linda's significant contributions as a Board member and as leader of the Fund Development Committee during a very successful year of fundraising activity. Kate Vickery will lead the committee through the end of our program year, but we are looking for interested individuals who might wish to take on Linda's Fund Development and Board responsibilities for the second half of her two-year term. [Please contact me](#) to let us know if this is of interest to you.

The events of the past month remind us of the role we must play as constant stewards of the earth, democracy, and racial and social justice, if indeed the arc of the moral universe is to continue to bend toward justice. Membership in and action through the League of Women Voters of Dane County provide the power to influence the vicissitudes of our political and social challenges in pursuit of a more just world. Thank you for your membership in LWVDC.



From the Executive Director

Kate Vickery, kate@lwvdanecounty.org

Friends, in the past few weeks, we have borne witness to preventable death caused by mass shootings and police-violence, all stemming from public policy decisions that we have a voice in making. I encourage you to read the joint statement from the National, Minnesota, and Minneapolis Leagues (*see sidebar*) about the conviction of Derek Chauvin for the murder of George Floyd. After you read it, take time to speak the names of the young Black and Brown people killed by police [just in the past few weeks](#), including Daunte Wright, Adam Toledo, Iremamber Sykap, Anthony Thompson Jr., and Ma'Khia Bryant. This list will be missing names by the time you are reading it.

Justice is not putting a single officer in prison for causing the death of a fellow human being. Justice is completely reimagining the public policy systems that reinforce racist ideologies and implicit bias. There is much work to be done. Here are some actions we can take:

- In **Madison**, pay attention to the Police Civilian Oversight Board (PCOB), a relatively new entity appointed by the Common Council to “review and make recommendations regarding police discipline, use of force, and other policies and activities...” You can sign up for information about the PCOB [here](#). League members Mary Anglim and Kathy Fullin are experts on the work of the PCOB.
- At the county level, the **Dane County** Criminal Justice Council is the government body focusing on reforming the criminal legal system. You can learn more about the Council [here](#). League member Laurie Egge, who also runs the Observer Corps project, observes the Council.
- At the state level, the **Wisconsin** Legislature has several bills on its agenda that would help improve police accountability, including: AB 108 & SB 120, which require use of force incidents to be reported; AB112 & SB 118, which create an Independent Use of Force Review Advisory Board; and AB109 & SB 122, which require WI DOJ to publish an annual use of force incident report publically.
- **Nationally**, call your members of Congress about the George Floyd Justice in Policing Act, a bill that builds more accountability into the policing system (read the League’s [statement](#) about the bill). While you’re calling, ask them to also support the For The People Act (S1), which is sweeping civil rights legislation that addresses everything from voting rights, to campaign finance reform, to redistricting.

These actions are not enough, of course. The call to action is big and will require sustained attention, focus, heart, and care. Onward.

Joint statement from the League of Women Voters of the United States, League of Women Voters of Minnesota, and the League of Women Voters of Minneapolis:

Today [4/20/21], the police officer responsible for the murder of George Floyd was held accountable for his crime. While the decision to convict George Floyd’s murderer was just, it does not remedy the undeniable fact that policing in America is fundamentally broken. The United States’ system of law enforcement, which was built on the legacy of slavery and racism has stolen the lives of Black and brown Americans for centuries, almost completely unchecked. Making one man answer for his crimes does not equal justice. This conviction was an outlier in a system built on white supremacy. Accountability and the eradication of racially-motivated violence should be the norm, not an exception. Police officers must be held to the same level of accountability as everyone else. We must radically reimagine public safety in this country and prioritize investments in economic opportunities, education, healthcare, and other community-led solutions, instead of perpetuating police violence.

Annual Member Meeting Details

Annual Meeting
Wednesday, June 2
5:30-6:45
via Zoom

SAVE THE DATE
2021
ANNUAL MEETING

Ballot Q&A
Thursday, May 6
6:30-7:30
via Zoom

Annual Meeting Ballot Q&A

You should have received your annual meeting materials and 2021 ballot by mail. Have questions before you vote? League members will be available on Thursday, May 6 at 6:30 p.m. to answer any questions you may have about items on the 2021 Ballot. Click [here](#) to join. No registration necessary. If you did not receive your materials in the mail, please email office@lwvdanecounty.org or download them electronically [here](#).

Annual Meeting

Details about the Annual Member Meeting and registration information can be found on our Events page online or by clicking this [link](#).

Notice to Members: Memorial Trust Fund

In compliance with League policy related to the Memorial Trust Fund, the Board gives notice of intent to withdraw up to 15% of the market value of the Memorial Trust Fund as of January 1 upon approval by 2/3 of the LWVDC Board and approval of a majority of the members present at the fiscal year 20-21 general meeting.

The LWVDC Board is requesting this out of the ordinary withdrawal to assist in the funding of the recently filled Executive Director staff position. It is intended that the Memorial Trust Fund will be utilized to partially fund the first three years of the Executive Director's salary. At the end of the three years, it is expected the position will be self-sustaining. It should be noted that while the intended withdrawal is significant, the League has not withdrawn funds from the Memorial Trust Fund since 2007 to help offset operational losses. The amount of those foregone withdrawals totals approximately \$115,000, well in excess of the planned request of \$74,000 to cover the Executive Director's salary and the normally allowed 4.5% to assist in covering operating expenses.

The Board welcomes questions about this via email [treasurer@lwvdanecounty.org] and at the Annual Meeting Ballot Q&A on May 6 at 6:30 p.m. (see above).

The LWVDC Apartment Project

Marian Matthews, mmatthews4306@gmail.com

The LWVDC Apartment Project, established in Fall 2019 and successful even during the COVID pandemic, is undergoing changes in leadership. JoAnn Boushon, who guided the project its beginning, is handing the leadership role to new co-coordinators Betty Cohen and Susan Latton. They look forward to building on the strength of this unique project and creating fresh approaches, which will be possible as our social environment allows more activity.

The concept for the Apartment Project originated in the Voter Service Committee and was built on the understanding that apartment residents tend to move more often than homeowners and would benefit from a special focus on voter outreach. The Voter Service Committee laid out levels of engagement for apartment managers, from sending emails to residents with voting information to allowing registration events at complexes.

JoAnn was well positioned to take on the coordinator role. Before retiring, she worked as the assistant to the Dean and Director of UW Cooperative Extension where she managed statewide projects. She volunteered with voter service activities and had recently moved to apartment living for the first time in decades.

Launching the project was a team effort. Paul Lindquist and Marian Matthews, Voter Service Committee co-chairs, applied their years of LWVDC expertise to help JoAnn create the foundation of the project. Paul, the all-around tech specialist for LWVDC, created a technology infrastructure, including a large spreadsheet for record keeping. He designed a [webpage](#) and online tools for identifying and “adopting” complexes, and for reporting adopter activities.

Marian assisted with the recruitment of volunteers to “adopt” apartment complexes. When the COVID pandemic shut down all group gatherings, Marian and JoAnn created Google Meet orientations for adopters. Materials that guided adopters with their role were created for the webpage.

JoAnn assisted adopters in selecting apartment complexes and building relationships with complex managers and owners. Commenting on her work with JoAnn, early adopter Wendy Hathaway said, “I very much appreciated her constant support and willingness to talk through problems and solutions.” Janet Murphy and Judy Munger, who also volunteered in the first months of the project said that early on, “JoAnn...had a plan well in hand and her enthusiasm and ease with it was infectious.”

The Apartment Project has grown and flourished in just 18 months. There are now over 500 apartment complexes in the master spreadsheet and 58 volunteers who have adopted over 200 complexes in Dane County. Adopters were encouraged to adopt complexes in low voter turnout wards and low income neighborhoods, where accurate, timely and nonpartisan information is critical.

Due to the pandemic, in-person voter registration events at apartment complexes, expected to be a foundational activity of the project, were not possible. JoAnn helped create informational flyers, often in English and Spanish, with details about voter registration, absentee voting, obtaining voter ID, and polling locations. Complex managers were asked to post or email them to residents. Some agreed to do literature drops at unit doors.

During the current transition period, JoAnn is encouraging enhancements to the project. “I believe there are possibilities for partnerships with Dane County management companies, municipal departments, and service organizations,” she said. “I also hope the project can reach more racially and ethnically diverse residents and people who live in complexes without on-site managers. More diversity in the pool of adopters could help with these challenges.”

JoAnn added, “The Apartment Project has been successful because it fills a need to reach an often hard-to-reach segment of our communities. It has been carried out by dedicated and determined volunteers. And it’s been supported by the assistance of apartment managers and owners who believe in civic engagement.”

Adopter Wendy Hathaway looked back on the first 18 months of The Apartment Project and summed it up this way:

“It turns out that trying to answer a simple question—‘How do we more effectively reach voters who live in apartments?’—is actually quite complex, and JoAnn has done a tremendous job building the Apartment Project from the ground up. She carefully considered the many challenges of this task from different angles and found creative solutions each time new challenges arose.”

You can volunteer with the Apartment Project by sending an email to aptproject@lwvdanecounty.org.

In Case You Missed It...

Have you seen the League’s blog, *Swinging for the Fences: At Bat for Climate and Democracy*, lately?

If not, there’s a bit to catch up on since the Bulletin was last published. In the most recent blog, [Wholesale Power](#), longtime League member Caryl Terrell explains game-changing regulatory orders that will allow companies to sell power generated locally from clean energy sources on the wholesale market (4/11); in [Connecting Candidates and the Community with 350 Madison’s Alder Election Team](#), guest blogger and member of 350 Madison (Madison’s local chapter of the international organization 350.org), Eliza Kruszynski introduces the organization’s Alder Election Team and alder candidate answers to two central carbon emission questions. 350 Madison is dedicated to reducing atmospheric carbon levels to below 350 parts per million (ppm), the widely accepted level for a stable climate.

Since the last Bulletin, the Program/Advocacy Committee has also produced the last virtual forum of the 2020-21 year: [Watts Ahead—Financing Our Energy Future](#). Click the hyperlink if you missed this important forum, and as always, feel free to share it with your friends on social media!

Untangling “the web of inequality that we’ve woven”

Lisa Janairo, ljanairo129@gmail.com

Last month’s book discussion and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Café brought 18 LWVDC members together to discuss housing discrimination throughout the U.S., including in the Madison area. As noted in the April *Bulletin*, Richard Rothstein’s *The Color of Law: A Forgotten History of How Our Government Segregated America* was the focus of both the book discussion and the second quarterly café sponsored by the DEI Committee this year.

Reactions to the book itself were largely consistent. We all had some prior knowledge of housing discrimination, but were surprised to learn about the extent to which government at all levels had engineered it. We had all heard about the practice of redlining, for example; but many of us thought banks or realtors had started the practice—we had no idea that it had originated with the federal government. It was especially surprising for some of us to learn that New Deal programs were rife with discriminatory and segregationist practices. For example, the Civilian Conservation Corps’ work camps for jobless youth and young adults were segregated not just in the South but in the North as well. Some of us felt the lingering effects of intentional, government-sanctioned segregation were so entrenched that it almost seemed like we can’t do anything to, in Rothstein’s words, “untangle the web of inequality that we’ve woven.”

But as LWV founder Carrie Chapman Catt famously said, “What should be done, can be done; what can be done, let us do.” Members identified education as one of the first things that should be done. We agreed there is a need to continue to educate ourselves as members and to offer programming for other members of the League as well as the public to bring this history to light as the first step toward fixing the problem. Ideally, the LWVDC would offer this programming with other organizations so that we can learn about and partner with them on advancing their preferred solutions to the problem of segregation and its impacts.

We also felt it important to change the history that is taught to students in middle and high schools, as Rothstein recommended, and to educate parents and other adults, too, so that people can understand the need for action to address past injustices. For example, housing subsidies to make home ownership or even renting more affordable for African American families is an appealing option to many of us; support for such measures, however, will likely be lacking if the general public does not understand the government’s direct, intentional role in segregating our cities (e.g., by encouraging or enforcing restrictive covenants and discriminatory lending practices).

Increasing the minimum wage was offered up as an effective way to make housing more affordable to all lower-income residents. Several members expressed interest in learning about Madison’s pilot project with “guaranteed basic income”—a program to combine direct payments with existing programs to support residents that are experiencing housing insecurity. Another idea that generated discussion was “purpose-built communities.” Featured recently on *60 Minutes*, this nonprofit “helps local leaders create greater racial equity, economic mobility, and improved health outcomes for families and children” by focusing on neighborhoods as the unit of change for addressing intergenerational poverty, failing schools, and high crime rates.

Members also discussed the community land trust model in which a nonprofit organization owns land on behalf of a community, with houses available for purchase by qualified buyers for the price of the house alone (not the land). The system is set up to make it possible for lower-income residents to afford home ownership and build equity while at the same time protecting future homebuyers from real estate prices

that rise faster than wages. Participants in the DEI Café were particularly interested in learning more about the operations and experiences of the Madison Area Community Land Trust, which has been operating since 1990.

If these ideas sound interesting to you, then consider joining your fellow LWVDC members in September when we'll be discussing Heather McGhee's critically acclaimed *The Sum of Us: What Racism Costs Everyone and How We Can Prosper Together*. Copies of the book should be available at your local library, although the waiting list may be long. Thinking ahead to even later in the year, November's selection will be *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge and the Teachings of Plants* by Robin Wall Kimmerer. Watch for the dates of these two book discussions to be announced later this summer. Coming up in July, the next quarterly DEI Café will focus on training modules and other DEI-related resources available through the LWV national website. Watch for details and a link to registration to be available in June.

Alternative Voting Systems Study Summit

Maria Spinozzi, mspinozzi@gmail.com

The study committee on alternative voting invites you to attend our Study Summit. This event is a chance for members like you to discuss the [consensus questions](#) before submitting your responses.

June 3, 2021
7 p.m. – 8 p.m.
[Register](#)

It is recommended that attendees be familiar with the study prior to this event. Many resources, including the written study, video presentations, and a compilation of previous bulletin articles can be found [on the event page](#). Please contact Maria Spinozzi at mspinozzi@gmail.com if you have any questions.

Consensus Questions

Not able to attend the summit? We still want your feedback on the important topic of alternate voting systems.

Please respond to our [Member Consensus Survey](#) before June 5, 2021.

New Members

We welcome these new members who joined us in March. An [updated member directory](#) is available on our website. If you have forgotten the password, there is a link to contact the webmaster for help.

Do you want to join the League?
[Sign up for a membership online.](#)

Debra Drewek
Jess Esplin
Kathleen Harker

Alan Kanne
Valerie Murphy
Willow Poore

Kathryn Shelton
Mary Ellen Spoerke

Contributions

Our work is supported by financial contributions beyond membership dues. Thank you to these supporters who donated in March.

Valentine's 2020-2021

Anonymous
Anonymous
Claire Rider

Joan & Allen Liegel
Karen Michael
Louise Robbins

Sandi & Tom Vandervest
William Kelly

Mary Bean Memorial

Sara Markham

General or Other Donations

Beverly Davison
Nancy Gettys
Joan Johnston

Donald Kliese
Elizabeth Lentz
Joan Schwarz

Bruce Tulloch

In Memory

We were saddened to learn of the passing of one of our League family, Ivy Edelman, in March. Ivy joined the League in 2016 and was deeply engaged in the Madison community both civically and professionally for many years. The Edelman family has made a stock donation to the League in Ivy's memory and we are incredibly grateful for this investment in the future of LWVDC. Thank you to Ivy and her family. You can read more about Ivy's life [here](#).

Support the League with a special donation in May!

We hope you will consider making a special donation to the League to help us close out our 2020-2021 fiscal year. This month, we are asking for your support in the growth of our Internship Program. For the past two years, we have had two excellent University of Wisconsin interns working on expanding on-campus voter registration and helping UW students become informed voters in national, state, and local races. With these successes in mind and with your support, we will offer two more internships during the 2021-2022 academic year, giving students opportunities to develop civic leadership skills by working with our Program/Advocacy committee.

"I have found that the most rewarding part of this internship is getting to work with other students to make voting more accessible to them. The voting process can be incredibly complicated and it is a great feeling when you can simplify it for others and leave them feeling empowered to go to the polls."

—Makayla Pesch, LWVDC Vote Team Intern

[Click to Donate!](#)

Discussion Units

Thank you!

Discussion Units are quiet for the summer. We will resume meeting in the fall. We just don't know how yet.



A big thank you to all of you who attended Discussion Units this year! Despite the pandemic we all learned how to use zoom so the Forums could continue as they have for years. By the middle of the year most of the Unit membership had returned to regular attendance levels.

Another huge thank you to the Discussion Unit Leaders. They not only learned how to schedule Zoom meetings, they learned to manage the administrative end of the meetings, and lead the discussions—all at the same time.

We have had a very busy and informative program years. Instead of the usual four Fora, and four Discussion Units. The Program Committee convened 12 Fora and two additional educational zoom webinars called “Revenge of the Marshes,” not including the inspiring and thought-provoking Lively Issues Luncheon and a special showing of a documentary, “Crisis Cops” about mental health policing! This meant there were 12 Discussion Units, resulting in a busy, thought-provoking program year.

If you missed any of the Fora, you can access them on the League of Women Voters Dane County [website](#). The resource materials continue to be available on the [Forum archives](#).

The Discussion Unit leaders plan to meet over the summer to digest all the changes of the past year and plan for the fall. We hope to see old and new members beginning in September.

Watch for announcements on the LWVDC website, E-news, and Bulletin later in the summer.

Upcoming Events

May 6	LWVDC Ballot Q&A Session, 6:30 p.m.
May 8	John Lewis Act Day of Action, 1-4 p.m.
May 12	LWVDC Board Meeting, 5:30 p.m.
May 26	LWDC ballots for Annual Meeting due
June 2	LWVDC Annual Meeting, 5:30 p.m.
June 3	LWVDC Alternative Voting Study Summit, 7 p.m.
June 11 & 12	LWVWI State Annual Meeting
July 14	LWVDC Board Meeting, 5:30 p.m.
Aug 11	LWVDC Board Meeting, 5:30 p.m.

