



FORWARD

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF WISCONSIN

Leaguers Head North for Learning, Levity and League Business at Annual Meeting



Left to right: LWVUS Board Liaison Connie Ferguson with MLD Team members Louise Petering, Jennifer Balma and Peggy Cox (missing: Anita Loch).

The shores of Lake Superior provided the perfect backdrop for the League’s state Annual Meeting, which featured presentations about economic inequality and the environment. More than 90 League members and guests joined our hosts from the Ashland-Bayfield Counties League, who gave a warm welcome that included a patriotic sheet cake with the LWV logo cast in blueberries and strawberries. This year’s meeting took place at the Best Western Hotel Chequamegon in Ashland on June 5-7.

Friday’s agenda included our Zabelle Malkasian lecturer, Jody Knauss, an analyst with the Center for Media and Democracy, who demonstrated the widening economic gap and loss of the middle class in Wisconsin and the nation. He suggested ways to reduce inequality, including:

1. Raise the inheritance tax.
2. Raise income taxes on capital gains.
3. End corporate welfare and close tax loopholes; turn tax deductions into capped tax credits.
4. Provide a \$2,500 universal child allowance.

5. Improve public infrastructure.
6. Improve college preparedness.

Following the program, we celebrated with cake and a champagne toast to outgoing LWVWI President Melanie Ramey. Executive Director Andrea Kaminski read a poem she wrote honoring Melanie’s service.

The poem, speaker slides and other meeting materials can be found at lwvwi.org/NewsEvents/2015AnnualMeeting.aspx.

On Saturday morning, Dawn White and Esteban Chiriboga from the Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission gave a presentation on the socioeconomic value of healthy ecosystems. White discussed cultural and spiritual aspects related to water resources and women from an Anishinaabeg perspective, and Chiriboga spoke about the long-term environmental effects of mining.

Our state Membership & Leadership Development team, led by Louise Petering, organized a series of presentations by local League leaders on how the Dane County, Northwoods and Manitowoc County Leagues have attracted

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News from National Key Structures of Democracy Program



*Elisabeth MacNamara,
LWVUS President*

At Convention 2014, delegates chose Key Structures of Democracy for the national program for the 2014-16 biennium. LWVUS committees have begun to collect and disseminate information on three areas of focus established for this program:

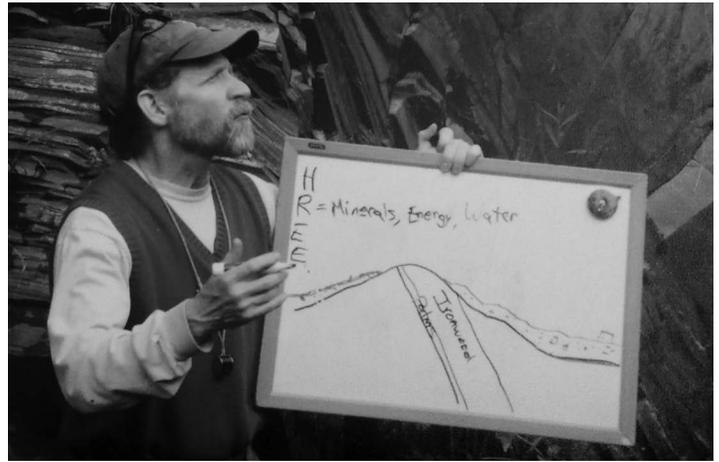
1. money in politics;
2. the process of amending the Constitution;
3. redistricting in the states.

The structures of democracy operate at all levels and reform is needed everywhere. As the LWVUS committees go about their work, Leagues in Wisconsin can inform our members and the public about these important topics. Target dates for key program elements include:

- Spring 2015: Education materials are posted on the League Management Website at <http://forum.lwv.org/member-resources/sections/our-work>.
- Fall 2015: Study guides and consensus questions will be posted for the Money in Politics Review and Constitutional Amendment Study. Leagues hold consensus meetings.
- February 1, 2016: Consensus reports from Leagues due to LWVUS (electronic).
- April 2016 national LWV Board meeting: Consensus reports and resulting positions, if any, approved.

Leagues can begin right away to gather information at the state and local levels about laws governing campaign finance and the constitutional amendment process. Leagues can also form study committees and identify expert speakers for community education forums. ❖

Follow @LWV_WI on Twitter!



Professor Tom Fitz, a geoscientist from Northland College, explains the potential effects of mining on groundwater quality to 39 Annual Meeting attendees who joined him on a tour of the Penokee Hills.

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new members and cultivated leadership. They were followed by Madelaine Herder and Lois Albrecht, members of LWV Ashland-Bayfield Counties, who drew upon their professional fund development experience for a presentation called “Fund Raising 101 for Local Leagues.”

At lunch our national board liaison, Connie Ferguson, delivered news from LWVUS about preparations for the League’s 100th anniversary in 2020 and beyond.

Always an inspiring part of our state Annual Meeting, the Parade of Leagues featured updates on the many activities of our 17 local Leagues. See story on page 7.

In the Plenary Session, delegates elected new state leaders, updated our Equal Rights and Social Policy positions, adopted new program items (see story on page 5) and approved a budget to fund the state League’s important work.

Saturday’s meetings ended on a high note with awards and recognitions:

- Membership & Leadership Development Awards: First Place LWV Northwoods
- Leadership Recognition Certificates from LWVUS to members of the Wisconsin Membership & Leadership Development Team and to Melanie Ramey in honor of her ten years as our state president
- Leadership Recognition from State Board to Melanie Ramey and Executive Director Andrea Kaminski
- Meg McLane Award for Advocacy: Helen Schwartz, LWV Greater Green Bay (see story on page 4)

The meeting concluded on Sunday with an educational tour of the Penokee Hills led by Professor Tom Fritz, a geoscientist at Northland College. Thirty-nine delegates and guests joined him on a hands-on adventure to learn about the many environmental issues related to mining in the north woods. ❖

President's Message



Debra Cronmiller

My first message as President begins with a confession: The thought of following Melanie Ramey's exemplary leadership of the State League over the past decade is nearly as daunting to me as the challenges facing our democracy.

I would love to tell you that I feel completely prepared for this opportunity, but who can fully prepare to address the current assaults on our democracy? Voter rights are under attack at all levels of government. Voters have more access to information than

ever, yet our collective intelligence seems completely compromised by soundbites and political agendas originating from beyond our state borders.

Despite this, I am confident that together we can educate voters, mobilize them on Election Day, and ensure that all eligible voters have the opportunity to vote. We can also empower our citizens to hold elected officials accountable for their decisions and the manner in which they make them.

My confidence is rooted in the strategic groundwork that Melanie and the State Board have laid to realize these goals. LWVWI has worked to grow our membership and followers in order to maximize impact. We have focused on providing relevant services to our local Leagues to assist with recruitment and retention of active and informed members. We have revised and updated our process for carrying out League program to ensure our positions are current and reflect today's changing landscape. More than ever, our League plays a critical role in informing citizens

and advocating for our well-researched positions.

I acknowledge the big shoes I have to fill. As I step up to this new role and address the many challenges and opportunities facing our 95-year-old organization, I will strive to enhance our visibility and focus constantly on updating and keeping relevant our positions. Yes, we have much work to do. We need volunteers and professionals, better and more communication and the financial resources to realize our vision for an open government in which all citizens actively participate. Wisconsin has long prioritized the role good government plays in assuring a high quality of life for its residents. Thanks to Melanie and every League member and supporter, the League is well positioned to ensure that this tradition continues to be honored.

Thank you for this opportunity. Daunting as it may be, I look forward to serving. I look forward to Making Democracy Work®. ❖

Save Trees and the League Money!

Money doesn't grow on trees, but we can save both by using email for League communications! Send an email to lwwwisconsin@lwwwi.org to sign up for any of the following (be sure to tell us which items you wish to receive by email):

- *Forward Newsletter*
- *League Updates and Action Alerts*

LWVWI's Enduring Support Contributor Program Makes Giving Easy!

One of the easiest ways to support the League is to become an Enduring Support Contributor by making ongoing contributions through monthly credit/debit card or checking account withdrawals.

- **Easy to set up**—just go to lwwwi.org/Donate.aspx and download and fill out the monthly giving form. You can also call the state office at (608) 256-0827 and we'll help you get started.
- **Easy to modify**—let us know anytime if you want to adjust the amount you're giving.
- **Easy to give**—once you set up your payment plan, no postage is needed!
- **Easy to give more**—you can break your annual contribution into smaller, more manageable monthly payments.

LWVWI Enduring Support Contributors provide a stable funding source that enables the League to plan and budget. Set up your Enduring Support account today and help Make Democracy Work®! ❖

2015 Meg McLane Award Honors Helen Schwartz

"I am so grateful for the Meg McLane Award. Our Migration Advocacy Network members were also appreciative and very pleased that (the) monetary gift went to Casa Alba Melanie's GED Spanish Program.

"It is important that we encourage (those from) other ... cultures to get out and vote. Many think it unnecessary and we are trying to give them a better understanding of how it affects their lives, especially at the local level. They are always eager to vote for President, but are unaware of how their votes will really count for the services each of us depends on in our communities. I was excited to have been chosen, and I will continue to think of Meg as I follow in her advocacy efforts. Thank you." ❖



Meg McLane Award winner Helen Schwartz, left, with Pat Finder-Stone, a fellow member of LWV Greater Green Bay and member of the State Board. Pat presented Helen with the award at the state Annual Meeting on June 5-7.

STATE LEAGUE LEADERSHIP

OFFICERS

Debra Cronmiller, President
LWV Appleton
2015-17

Ethel Himmel, Vice President
LWV Janesville
2015-16

Joyce McCollum, Treasurer
LWV Greater Green Bay
2015-16

Andrea Kaminski, Secretary
LWV Dane County
2015-17

STAFF

Andrea Kaminski
Executive Director

Julia Franco
Administrative/
Program Assistant

DIRECTORS

Julie Arneith
LWV Greater Green Bay
2014-16

Jaci Collins
LWV Manitowoc County
2015-17

Patricia Finder-Stone
LWV Greater Green Bay
2015-17

Linda Jorgenson
LWV Ashland/Bayfield Counties
2014-16

Louise Petering
LWV Milwaukee County
2014-16

Melanie Ramey
LWV Dane County
2015-17

Pamela Rewey
LWV Dane County
2015-16

NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Ellen Rosborough
LWV La Crosse Area

Lindsay VanVonderen
LWVWI Member at Large

*State board member,
to be appointed July 25.*

LOCAL LEAGUES

Appleton
Ashland/Bayfield Counties
Beloit
Dane County
Door County
Greater Green Bay
Janesville
La Crosse Area
Manitowoc County
Milwaukee County
Northwoods
Ozaukee County
Ripon Area
Stevens Point Area
Whitewater Area
Winnebago County
Wisconsin Rapids Area
Upper St. Croix Valley Members-
at-Large Group

State Program Priorities

Delegates adopted four program activities for the 2015-16 League year at the state Annual Meeting in Ashland last month:

1. Review and update of our state Urban Policy position.

LWVWI will survey League boards for feedback and recommendations on the current position, including the title and scope of the position and its adequacy for effective action at the state and local levels. LWVWI will propose a revision for consensus and adoption at the 2016 Annual Meeting. See sidebar for a tentative timeline.

2. Education and advocacy campaign on infrastructure/economy.

Throughout the year, LWV Milwaukee County will help selected local Leagues convene civic leaders and groups in their communities to facilitate local educational programs related to public infrastructure and the economy.

3. Continuation of education and advocacy campaign on protection of water resources, with a focus on locally relevant action campaigns.

The LWV Lake Michigan Region and the newly forming Upper Mississippi River Inter-League Organization will be included in the discussion and advocacy. By mid-September, LWVWI will provide an online website or forum through which local Leagues can communicate.

4. Continuation of education and advocacy campaign on redistricting.

Activity level will depend on grant funding, but will include some or all of the following: educational presentations to civic groups and meetings; op-eds and letters to the editor supporting independent redistricting reform; advocacy for county-based advisory referenda supporting independent redistricting reform; advocacy for a model county system of independent redistricting.

These activities will be carried out in conjunction with the League's continued emphasis on educating and preparing voters to participate in the 2016 elections, which this year will need to focus on compliance with the new photo ID requirements. ❖

*Review & Update of Urban Policy Position
Tentative Timeline*

July–August 2015

State committee develops survey to gather initial feedback and recommendations on the current position from local Leagues.

September 8, 2015

State Office sends online survey to local Leagues.

September–November 2015

Local Leagues review and discuss survey questions.

December 1, 2015

Local League comments due to State Office.

Committee reviews comments and drafts revision.

January 8, 2016

State Office sends proposed revised position to local Leagues for discussion.

February 29, 2016

Local League comments on proposed revision due to State Office.

March 2016

Committee reviews comments and proposes revision to State Board.

March 2016

State Board reviews committee proposal, recommends Program items for vote by delegates at Annual Meeting.

April 2016

Call to Annual Meeting (60 days prior); recommended Program items are sent to Leagues.

Date TBA

Annual Meeting

Delegates to Annual Meeting consider recommendations and vote to adopt or not. ❖

Find the League on Facebook!

[facebook.com/pages/League-of-Women-Voters-of-Wisconsin](https://www.facebook.com/pages/League-of-Women-Voters-of-Wisconsin)

Executive Director's Message



Andrea Kaminski

A few years ago, I would not have guessed that I would see state League leaders responding to online surveys and talking about Facebook and Twitter as powerful advocacy and organizing tools. Yet that is exactly what happened June 18-21 at LWVUS Council,

a national convening of state League leaders that takes place in odd-numbered years. This year's Council theme was "Celebrating Our Past, Embracing the Future."

While the League's mission to advocate for active and informed participation in government is still vital, we can no longer rely on the organizing tools of the past to reach people today, LWVUS President Elisabeth MacNamara stressed.

"Imagine if our suffrage forebears had the tools that exist today! I believe [LWV founder] Carrie Chapman Catt would jump for joy," MacNamara said. "She would jump at the chance to reach thousands of 'friends' and 'followers' with a single message. She would glory in the ability to get those friends and followers to send her message to elected officials just by clicking a link. She would welcome anyone willing to take even one single action in support of the cause."

In Wisconsin, we need to call upon every communication tool—new and old—to educate and assist people who need to obtain an ID in order to vote. As a member of the Our Democracy 2020 coalition, the League will employ many strategies to reach people and help them comply with the law.

A Council session on proactive voter reforms reminded me of many positive aspects of elections in our state. Election Day Registration and no-excuse absentee voting help keep elections free, fair and accessible in Wisconsin. Our state Government Accountability Board is a national model for nonpartisan election administration, and our local election officials are the best in the nation.

Still, elections can and must continue to improve. LWVUS has identified five proactive reforms that offer voters more options and ensure that every qualified citizen has the opportunity to vote, including: permanent and portable statewide voter registration; improved polling place management; expanded early voting; secure online voter registration; and electronic streamlining. (We will elaborate on these measures in a future issue of *Forward*.)

Even in Wisconsin's current political environment, we can set the stage for these reforms through traditional League tactics such as writing opinion columns and discussing needed reforms in testimony and at public forums. We are also active on Facebook and Twitter, where many younger people and reporters follow the League.

Every League member and supporter can help promote these reforms. Attend a forum or write a letter to the editor. Talk to your friends and acquaintances about these efforts.

At Council we learned that three times as many people follow the League online as there are formal members. These followers respond to the League's action alerts and contribute to its finances and success. If you are a social networker, be sure to follow @LWV_WI on Twitter and "like" the League of Women Voters of Wisconsin in Facebook and click "Get Notifications." When you see our posts, share them with your followers and comment on the posts to foster vigorous public discussion.

These online tools, in combination with the League's proven hands-on advocacy and voter service, give us unlimited communication capabilities. Now we can reach more people than ever before with the message that informed and active participation is the best way to ensure a responsible and responsive government.

On the final day of Council, the Wisconsin League challenged the Minnesota League to see which state can achieve the highest voter turnout in the national election in 2016. Wisconsin is usually a close second to Minnesota in this contest, but blending our tried-and-true voter outreach strategies with far-reaching social media may turn this around. We've already introduced this competition on Facebook and Twitter, and we'll be reaching out to the traditional media soon.

Go Badgers! ❖

Around the State • Around the State • Around the State Around the State • Around the State • Around the State Around the State • Around the State • Around the State

Appleton: presented inaugural Making Democracy Work® Award; hosted the fifth annual Women's Equality Day event; co-sponsored a candidates panel on public education; cohosted "Understanding Human Trafficking in the Fox Valley—the Crime, the Victims and the Community," a public event that featured a discussion led by local experts.

Ashland/Bayfield Counties: sponsored and participated in numerous programs advocating for clean water and air; offered voter education forums and voter registration drives.

Beloit: along with LWV Janesville, sponsored a fun, well-attended celebration to mark Susan B. Anthony's birthday; collaborated with other organizations to educate League members and the public about mass incarceration.

Dane County: hosted programs about equity, including one featuring a presentation by the Wisconsin Council on Children and Families about its "Race to Equity Report"; presented a lively issues forum on marriage equality in Wisconsin.

Door County: held voter registration drives for 18-year-olds at area high schools; hosted two presentations about open meetings law that were taped and rebroadcast on the Sturgeon Bay access channel and posted online at [youtube.com/watch?v=ntZ1_HwAGLU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ntZ1_HwAGLU).

Greater Green Bay: kicked off the year with a well-attended program on legislative issues facing education, including voucher expansion, financing education and Common Core standards; hosted a meet-and-greet session for Assembly and Senate candidates; presented the second annual Making Democracy Work® Award to Dennis Rader, nominated by the Migration Advocacy Network.

La Crosse Area: offered a number of programs about redistricting and poverty.

Lake Michigan Region: hosted Annual Meeting in Traverse City, MI, which 100 people attended; secured \$33,000 in grant funding to finance more than 40 presentations to audiences in four basin states, the LWV National Convention in Dallas and in Washington, D.C.

Manitowoc County: hosted Annual Meeting with keynote speaker Jennifer Kern, National Issue Campaign Director for Working Families Organization; presented an education program about the local school referendum, which successfully passed last spring.

Milwaukee County: registered more than 1,000 new voters and distributed approximately 5,000 "How to Register and Vote in Wisconsin" brochures (English and Spanish) at Naturalization Ceremonies in Milwaukee; received the Nonprofit Center of Milwaukee's 2014 Excellence in Community Organizing Award for high school voter registration initiative.

Northwoods: working with local high schools on voter registration and voting simulation; hosting a "Get to Know the League Event" in the Tomahawk area.

Ozaukee County: co-sponsored two information forums about how to volunteer and/or run for public office; read and discussed the book *The New Jim Crow* by Michelle Alexander.

Ripon Area: conducting a local study of poverty in the Ripon and Green Lakes areas; developing local actions in response to our surface and groundwater study; advocated successfully to have the city add #5 plastic to its curbside recycling program.

Stevens Point Area: hosted a program about water quality and quantity that featured speakers from the Little Plover River Group and UW-Extension; cohosted with LWV Wisconsin Rapids the first Memorial Public Forum in honor of founding member Maxine Burress.

Upper St. Croix Valley Members-at-Large: celebrated the launch of this newly forming local League with a wine, cheese and chocolate party and open house.

Whitewater Area: commemorated our 50th anniversary with a program during which charter members reminisced and reminded us of ongoing challenges and local legislators discussed redistricting and the devaluation of the right to vote.

Winnebago County: presented a "Soapbox Series" fundraiser featuring keynote speaker Charles Franklin, Director of the Marquette Law School Poll, who discussed polling in Wisconsin; co-sponsored "Navigating Health Insurance," a public forum that offered enrollment information for the Affordable Care Act.

Wisconsin Rapids Area: co-sponsored the State of the City Address by Wisconsin Rapids Mayor Zach Viruwink; joined with UW-Stevens Point in presenting a public forum entitled "Paying for Healthcare: Will it Bankrupt the Nation?" ❖

Did you know?

You may be able to support the League and save money by giving an otherwise taxable distribution from your IRA to the League of Women Voters of Wisconsin. LWVWI is a tax-exempt organization under Section 501(c)(3) of the IRS tax code. Ask your financial adviser for details.



LWVWI Executive Director Andrea Kaminski (third from right) is serving on a subcommittee of the Dane County Board of Supervisors charged with developing and proposing an impartial process for drawing voting lines. The subcommittee was launched June 22 and is made up of county and municipal officials, an expert in impartial redistricting, representatives of the League of Women Voters and an action group representing a minority community. The subcommittee intends to present model legislation to the County Board by the end of 2015.



In April, LWVWI won the 2015 Lifetime Achievement Award from ACLU-Wisconsin at its Bill of Rights Celebration. From left: LWVWI Board members Debra Cronmiller, Melanie Ramey and Pat FINDER-STONE.

League of Women Voters of WI 2015 Calendar

LWVWI Board Meeting
LWVWI Advocacy Network
Board Meeting
July 24-25
Madison

LWVWI Board Meeting
October 9
Madison

Issues Briefing
October 10
Madison

Registration Open for LWV Lake Michigan Region Annual Meeting

Save the date for "On the Divide," the 48th Annual Meeting and Conference of the LWV Lake Michigan Region! Leaguers from all four Lake Michigan states will gather September 24-25 at the Wyndham Suites in Glenview, IL for two days of stimulating presentations and productive workshops. Reserve your hotel room soon for best rates; multiple nights at the discounted rate are available. You do not need to be a delegate or League member to attend.

Visit LWVLMR.org for information, details and forms. Registration is open through September, but the hotel's group discount expires on August 26. ❖



LEAGUE OF
WOMEN VOTERS®
OF WISCONSIN



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