



Making Democracy Work®

► Vol. 91, No. 1 August 2011

FORWARD

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF WISCONSIN EDUCATION FUND, INC.

Annual Meeting June 10-11, 2011 UW-Whitewater

State Leaguers gathered on UW-Whitewater's campus on June 10-11 for the 2011 Annual Meeting. The sixty-five delegates in attendance were briefed on the many recent changes in Wisconsin's political arena and they explored ways to capitalize on these issues to educate voters and attract new members.

Delegates got down to business Friday night at a workshop presented by the Membership Recruitment Initiative state coaching team, focusing on how local Leagues can develop a welcoming and intentional approach to attracting and retaining members. The coaching team, which is led by Louise Petering, LWV Milwaukee County, and includes Peggy Cox, LWV Winnebago County and Vonna Pitel, LWV Ozaukee County, has received training and support from LWVUS. In turn each coach works with two local Leagues in our state via telephone calls and email. The participating Leagues report gains in membership as well as increased enthusiasm for their programs.

Following the workshop, LWV Whitewater Area hosted a dessert reception featuring harp music by Lauren Hayes, whose mother later joined the Whitewater League! The reception took place in Starin Hall, UW-Whitewater's new suite-style dormitory and the first state-owned LEED-certified residence hall in Wisconsin.

On Saturday keynote speaker and UW-Madison political scientist Charles Franklin's presentation "Every Which Way But Forward: The Impact of Polarized Politics in Wisconsin," included detailed data illustrating the rift. While his graphs left little hope for political consensus in the near future, they did show that Wisconsinites are clearly following the issues and engaged politically. There is an opportunity for the League to reach out and provide tools to help people be informed voters and active participants in their government.



Membership Recruitment team and others at Annual Meeting. Left to right: Vonna Pitel, Julie Arneith, Louise Petering, Janis McMillen (LWVUS), Andrea Kaminski, Melanie Ramey, Peggy Cox.

State board and legislative committee members led roundtable discussions and workshops on:

- State legislative issues
- Voter service in the wake of the new election law
- Supreme Court observer program
- New members-only website
- Lake Michigan LWV issues
- Redistricting

Ellen Rosborough, LWV La Crosse Area, demonstrated the state League's new members-only website to delegates. This password-protected area on the LWVWI website is under development, with three Leagues testing it as a secure place to store documents, keep an internal meeting calendar and host a member forum. The site will be available to all League members in the coming months.

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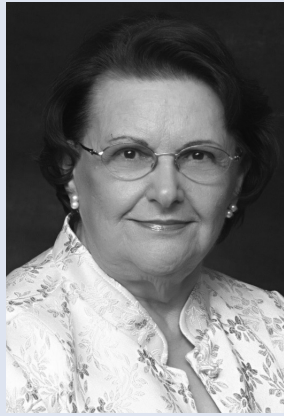
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President's Message

Melanie G. Ramey

Earlier this year I wrote an opinion column that was published by *The Capital Times* and *Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel* titled "High court should resolve differences in open session—and then move on." The column described what League members observed during two days of open administrative sessions by the Supreme Court and referred to the way the justices last summer handled a disciplinary procedure for Justice Gableman. It noted that the justices bickered and sniped at one another before splitting 3-3 on the discipline case. The two opposing factions could not even agree to release their opinions at the same time.



"And that was just what the public saw. Who knows what transpired behind the scenes? We got a glimpse of it last week, and it wasn't pretty," we wrote.

It is sad to note that things have only gone downhill since our column was published in February. The Judicial Commission and the Dane County Sheriff are now investigating a charge that Justice Prosser grabbed Justice Bradley in a chokehold over the timing of the release of the court's decision about the collective bargaining bill.

The League of Women Voters has launched a program placing League observers at open Supreme Court sessions to monitor the discussions and interactions of the justices. Our goal is to better understand the issues they are dealing with and to educate our members and the public.

League members have spent three days so far this year observing how the justices hash out difficult questions about how the high court operates. The discussions were often contentious and at times downright disrespectful. They read aloud long memos they had been sending one another in recent months, trading gibes and accusations, and referring to verbal conflicts they had had in closed sessions.

Chief Justice Abrahamson has referred to "festering issues" about management and control that continue to hinder the court's productiveness. We believe these issues should be dealt with in open session and laid to rest in a civil manner and prescribed timeframe in open session, and we agree with Governor Walker that a mediator might be needed to facilitate this process. The mediator should be a highly reputable and qualified person from outside of Wisconsin who has not previously worked with members of the court to insure impartiality.

We who elect the justices deserve to know what is keeping them from doing the work of the court. We also deserve to have them deal with difficult issues in a timely and efficient manner. In a business setting such administrative issues would commonly be handled in a meeting of two hours or less. An employee accused of a physical confrontation would be put on leave.

The justices need to settle their differences promptly without attacks, sarcasm or recriminations. And then they should get back to the work of the court. ❖

MEG MCLANE AWARD FOR ADVOCACY



2011 Meg McLane Award Goes to Darlene Wellner

The State League honored Darlene Wellner, LWV Manitowoc, with its annual Meg McLane Award at the Annual Meeting on June 11. The award was given in recognition of her advocacy for the rights of people who are incarcerated or reintegrating into society following prison.

A retired social worker, Wellner helped found the Manitowoc County Prison Aftercare Circle of Hope Program, which seeks to break the cycle of recidivism by providing support and advice to ex-inmates so they can stay out of prison.

Wellner joined the League in 1962 and has twice served as local president. She has noted that her experiences with League have been foundational to her advocacy.

The Meg McLane Advocacy Award is presented annually to recognize and honor leading advocates for good government. Past recipients include June Kjome, Nancy Stabb, Connie Threinen, and Barbara Hussin. ❖

State League Supports LWV Lake Michigan Positions

The state League has endorsed a set of policy positions proposed by the Lake Michigan LWV on:

*Energy • Global Warming • Air • Land • Water
Pesticides • Pesticide Reduction*

The LMLWV has developed an overview of facts related to these positions that demonstrates the urgent need for action on these matters. These include:

Wetlands:

Wetlands can store up to five million gallons of floodwater per acre, acting as natural tubs or sponges. Similar in productivity and diversity to tropical rain forests and coral reefs, U.S. wetlands are home to 31% of plant species and up to one half of North American bird species while occupying only about 5% of land surface.

Wetlands filter sediments from agricultural runoff, leaking septic tanks and inadequate wastewater treatment facilities. Although the 1972 Clean Water Act provided protection for all the nation's waters from unregulated pollution and destruction, many bodies of water today escape that protection as a result of two Supreme Court rulings that excluded protection for any "non-navigable water," thus removing wetlands from regulation.

Wastewater/Sewage-Plant Capacity

There are few totally adequate wastewater treatment facilities in the U.S. Heavy storms challenge treatment facilities, resulting in overflows of untreated sewage directly into streams and lakes, adding myriads of pesticides, pathogens (E. coli, among others) and chemical pollutants, mercury being the most prevalent, into drinking water. Chicago and Milwaukee have suffered an unduly high number of sewage outflows in recent years.

Wastewater Treatment Efficacy

We are just beginning to recognize dangers associated with substances that get into our water supply, such as pharmaceuticals, estrogenic compounds, personal care products and household cleaning products, industrial pollutants and materials that leach out from landfills. In fact, of the thousands of chemicals routinely released into our water supply, only about two hundred are regularly monitored. Scientists are on the cusp of developing an approach that will prioritize specific watersheds to analyze for the presence of certain chemicals. The EPA is waiting for the problem to be well defined before taking action.



Alien Aquatic Invasives

In assuming responsibility for enforcing the Clean Water Act, the EPA chose to exclude regulatory oversight of ballast water brought into the U.S. via the St. Lawrence Seaway in trans-Atlantic commercial freighters. Neither Canada nor the U.S. has had any binding rules requiring ballast water invasives be held to a specific legal limit, nor were requirements for ships to rinse out ballast tanks prior to entering the Seaway ever strictly enforced. As a result, Lake Michigan harbors nearly 200 alien aquatic creatures. Among the most prevalent are:

Lamprey Eel: Since the 1950s, the U.S. and Canadian governments have worked together to reduce lamprey populations through trapping, sterilizing and poisoning techniques.

Zebra and Quagga Mussel: These mussels strip the water column of plankton and nutrients on which native fish depend for sustenance, resulting in increased water clarity and concentration of either botulism bacteria or toxins that enter the food chain and threaten the endangered piping plover, bald eagle and a number of other state-listed bird and fish species.

Asian Carp: Silver and bighead potentially most threatening.

Falling Water Levels

Lake Michigan's water level is predicted to be down by 8 to 10 inches from last summer due to lower-than-average snowfall and precipitation over the past year together with less ice cover, thus allowing for greater evaporation. Decreased water levels have a detrimental effect on commercial operations and costly dredging has been required in many ports and connecting channels. ❖

The state League also led a compliance workshop for local Leagues to help them understand what will be expected of them if and when the IRS grants the group exemption, which will extend the LWVWI Education Fund's 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status to all local Leagues in the state.

In the business portion of the Annual Meeting, delegates approved a slate of officers and directors, a bylaws revision in compliance with the 501(c)(3) group exemption and an organizational budget for the coming year. The board recommended that, rather than conduct a new study this year, the state League should continue to advocate on health care, sustainability, voting rights and judicial impartiality issues. This decision, made in light of limited resources and a challenging political environment, was accepted by delegates. ❖



Cookies made by LWV Whitewater Area



Harpist Lauren Hayes

STATE LEAGUE LEADERSHIP

OFFICERS

Melanie Ramey
President
Dane County
2011-2013

Debra Cronmiller
Vice President
Appleton
2010-2012

Ellen Rosborough
Treasurer
La Crosse Area
2010-2012

Julie Arneth
Secretary
Greater Green Bay
2011-2013

STAFF

Andrea Kaminski
Executive Director

Lindsay VanVonderen
Administrative/
Program Assistant

DIRECTORS

Laura Boettcher
Janesville
2010-2012

Patricia Finder-Stone
Greater Green Bay
2010-2012

Ethel Himmel
Janesville
2011-2013

Linda Jorgenson
Ashland/Bayfield Counties
2010-2012

Joyce McCollum
Greater Green Bay
2011-2013

Louise Petering
Milwaukee County
2011-2012

Pamela Rewey
Dane County
2011-2013

NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Marilyn Boeldt, Chair
Milwaukee County
2011-2012

Nancy Hill
La Crosse Area
2011-2012

State board member, to be appointed.

LOCAL LEAGUES

Appleton
Ashland/Bayfield Counties
Beloit
Dane County
Door County
Greater Green Bay
Janesville
La Crosse Area
Manitowoc County
Milwaukee County
Ozaukee County
Ripon Area
Stevens Point Area
Whitewater Area
Winnebago County
Wisconsin Rapids Area

New Voter ID Law Complicates Recall Election

Wisconsin's restrictive new election law was signed by Governor Walker on May 25, giving election officials and voting rights advocates only a few short weeks to educate citizens before the unprecedented number of recall elections scheduled for this summer. Parts of the new law went into effect immediately, and the League was concerned this would cause some confusion for voters and election officials alike. The League has collaborated with election officials and other nonpartisan groups to help ensure that every eligible citizen who wants to cast a vote can do so and have it count this summer. Through press releases and interviews as well as individual emails and telephone conversations with voters, the state League worked to help people understand the new law.

In the coming months the League will continue the public education campaign, assist people in understanding how to obtain a voting ID, and gather stories of individuals who may be disenfranchised by the law for evidence in case of future litigation.

New procedures in effect immediately

1. Voters are asked to show an official photo ID, although they are not required to do so to obtain a regular ballot this summer. Voters who do not have an official ID receive information about what kind of ID will be required for voting beginning in 2012.

2. The new election law requires a citizen to be a resident of a voting district for at least 28 consecutive days (up from 10 days) prior to the election in order to vote in that district. Registered voters who move within 28 days of an election may vote in their old district.
3. The new law has shortened the period when citizens may cast an absentee vote in their municipal clerk's office. It is now a two-week period (down from 30 days) that ends at 5 PM on the Friday before the election.
4. Voters must sign the poll book in order to get a ballot. There is an exception for voters with a physical disability.
5. Citizens no longer may use corroboration by a neighbor or relative to establish residency when registering to vote.

What has not changed

1. Voters do not have to show an official ID to vote in this summer's elections (see above).
2. Citizens may register to vote at their polling place on Election Day. The Government Accountability Board's Voter Public Access website (vpa.wi.gov/) is a great source of information where citizens can check their voter registration status, polling place, election dates and a sample ballot. ❖

Where to go for information about the elections and the candidates

Watch for new voting information on the GAB website:

gab.wi.gov/elections-voting/

Check the League of Women Voters' online "candidates' answers" voter guide posted on our website lwvwi.org.

Volunteers needed for poll watching

The League of Women Voters, working with several other nonpartisan groups, is organizing an election observer program for the August elections. The League is working to recruit, train and place volunteers in polling places in all of the Senate recall districts.

To volunteer, send an email to lwvwisconsin@lwvwi.org or sign up on the League's website, lwvwi.org.

Make the League Part of Your Legacy

The League of Women Voters is the organization where hands-on work to safeguard democracy leads to civic improvement. Guided by principles that help nurture and protect our government systems, the League is a "trusted convener" that helps citizens understand and influence policies that affect their lives and liberties.

You can help advance these efforts in Wisconsin and leave your legacy by making a tax-deductible gift to the LWVWI Education Fund Endowment. Income from bequests, gifts of stock and memorial gifts sustains the League well into the future. The next time you review your charitable giving plan, consider the League. For more information, contact Andrea Kaminski, (608) 256-0827. ❖

Parade of Leagues • Parade of Leagues • Parade of Leagues Parade of Leagues • Parade of Leagues • Parade of Leagues Parade of Leagues • Parade of Leagues • Parade of Leagues

Appleton: collaborated with ESTHER, an interfaith group for social justice, in hosting Secretary of Transportation Ray LaHood to help spotlight the League’s support of public transportation; held a reception for retired teachers.

Beloit: cosponsored “The Descendants of Wonder Woman Project,” a program that educates young women about women’s struggles throughout history. Collaborators included public libraries, public schools, the Wisconsin Humanities Council, women’s groups and colleges; hosted three candidate forums with combined audiences totaling 900 people.

Dane County: continue to register voters at the Dane County Farmers Market; published Candidates’ Answers voter guide in weekly Madison newspaper; hosted monthly issues forums on a variety of topics.

Door County: hosted a six-member delegation from Azerbaijan and their interpreter as part of “Accountable Governance-Strengthening Local Government,” an initiative sponsored by the Open World Leadership Center and LWVUS Global Democracy program; operate an observer corps that monitors 16 local government bodies.

Greater Green Bay: organized an immigration committee that is helping people become citizens; submitted a redistricting plan that would keep the county board from expanding from 26 to 29 members and would not have any current supervisors running against each other in 2012; gained 10 new members in past year.

Janesville: established a climate change and sustainability task force that is hosting a discussion group series in the public library; gained nine new members in past year.

La Crosse Area: organized a sustainable community working group; celebrated LWV’s 90th anniversary with a showing of *Iron Jawed Angels* at a 90-year-old movie theater; working to educate voters for the recall elections.

Lake Michigan: evolved into largest “interleague organization” that educates members and the public about pollution and water-quality issues.

Manitowoc: marked the 40th anniversary of celebrating Earth Day in our county, an event cofounded by League; hosted Lake Michigan LWV annual meeting with assistance from LWV Ozaukee County.

Milwaukee County: working on LWVUS study of privatization of government services; sponsored showing of *Iron Jawed Angels* at Alverno College to educate students about women’s suffrage movement; providing voter information to new citizens at naturalization ceremonies.

Ozaukee County: hosted a Women’s History Month luncheon and fundraiser that featured actress Rose Stephenson’s portrayal of Louisa May Alcott; sponsored a potluck breakfast including presentations on healthcare, sustainability and judicial impartiality.

Ripon Area: conducting a ground and surface water study and sponsored a public program on the topic; educating voters about how to get an eligible ID in an area with no DMV and no public transportation.

Stevens Point Area: planted a tree in a local park in celebration of local League’s 50th anniversary; launching “School Funding Reform for Wisconsin,” an initiative with a sign-on form on local chapter website.

Whitewater: hosted public programs on several topics, including UW-Whitewater’s environmental initiatives, the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, immigration and naturalization law, and the impact of the proposed state budget; established a student LWV chapter on the UW-Whitewater campus; hosted state Annual Meeting; built an award-winning float for local Fourth of July parade.

Winnebago: Supported the reduction of county board size by attending all standing committee meetings during “A Fresh Look at County Board Organization,” a forum that included a county board chair panel and by conducting a comparison study of Wisconsin urban county board sizes and committee structures.

Wisconsin Rapids Area: Cosponsored free public workshops on energy efficiency for homeowners. ❖

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 lwvwisconsin@lwvwi.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*

Executive Director's Message



Andrea Kaminski

This spring I was honored to participate in a weeklong leadership development program, thanks to our Wisconsin state board, LWVUS and American Express (AE). For a number of years AE has generously supported LWVUS voter education programs, and this year they invited the League to have staff members apply for their Leadership Academy. The national League, in turn, reached out to a number of state League staffers and I was the lucky state Leaguer selected to attend the Academy along with Cheryl Graeve, Kelly McFarland Stratman, Jeanette Senecal and Maggie Duncan from LWVUS.

The AE Leadership Academy is an intensive five-day seminar that takes place at the American Express headquarters in New York City. It is produced in partnership with the Center for Creative Leadership (CCL), highly regarded as the foremost practitioner of leadership education and research.

American Express generously covered all expenses except airfare. In the next few months, AE will also provide me with continued support through three calls with a CCL executive coach. I would be remiss not to thank the LWV board members and my friends and colleagues who completed lengthy surveys to help me prepare for the program.

Each participant identified one challenge to focus on at the seminar and in the coming months. I chose to address the advice of last year's membership coaches to "shatter the existing definition of League membership." They told us that people's expectations for a membership organization have changed and that talk about such things as per-member assessments can be a turnoff to potential members, in particular, younger people.

Given that the state League is in the middle of a three-level organizational structure (local, state and national), it is not yet clear how we will redefine membership and make it work. However, I believe Leaguers are capable of meeting any challenge when we rely on the traditional League approach:

- *Study the issue, taking into consideration many points of view*
- *Work for consensus*
- *Act*

I'll be working with the state board and my colleagues at LWVUS in coming months to propose a new membership model for the Wisconsin League at our next Annual Meeting and seeking input from local League boards as well as members-at-large. I welcome your suggestions and look forward to a bright future for the League. ❖

LWVWI AND LWVUS

Members and staff have represented Wisconsin League in the following LWVUS programs this year:

Pat Finder-Stone, LWV Greater Green Bay and State Board member, and Earnestine Moss, LWV Dane County, were delegates to LWVUS Council in Leesburg, VA, June 17-20

Andrea Kaminski attended Clean Air Lobby Days in Washington, DC, July 18-19

League of Women Voters of WI Education Network/ Advocacy Network 2011 Calendar

Recall election for 7 Senate districts & special election for Assembly District 48
August 9

Recall election for 2 Senate districts
August 16

LWV State Board Planning Meeting
August 19-20, Madison

LWV State Board Meeting
October 7, Madison

Issues Briefing
October 8, Madison

Lady Liberties Take to the Streets on Behalf of League

A group of Lady Liberties helped LWV Whitewater Area dance its way into first place in their hometown's Fourth of July parade this month as they accompanied their winning float entry "Proud to be an American Who Votes."

"It was great fun to hear applause from the crowd as we danced down Main Street," noted League President Ellen Penwell, who marched in the parade along with fellow Leaguers Sarah Linn and Becky Schaeffer. "I think of the many women before me who fought vigorously for my right to vote and this is how I'm able to bring myself to dress in bed sheets and dance down Main Street in front of my community."

Over the past five years, LWV Whitewater Area parade floats have placed among the top three four times and won a total of \$600 for their chapter's operating expenses.

"Our entries send a positive League message, demonstrate that the League can be fun and raise money—a winning combination," Penwell added. "Our profile in the community is strong, in part due to our yearly appearance in the parade, but more importantly for our programming, the candidate forums we sponsor and our voter registration drives." ❖



The Lady Liberties who danced their way down Main Street on behalf of the League: Sarah Linn, Ellen Penwell, Gaby (friend of Sarah's) and Becky Schaeffer.



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