



Speaker Highlights Need For a Complete Count in 2010 Census

Every 10 years, the United States takes stock of itself. This inventory, mandated by the U.S. Constitution, aims to count every person living within our borders. Accurately accounting for more than 300 million people is difficult, and it is estimated that the 2000 census missed more than 3 million people.

In Wisconsin, the stakes are high for a complete and accurate count:

- 1) Census data comprise the basis for allocating political representation for our state in the federal government and for municipalities in state government.
- 2) The federal government relies on the census count to allocate almost \$400 billion in grants to states for needed government programs and services including education, health, crime prevention and infrastructure. For every person not counted, our state will lose \$12,000 over the next 10 years.
- 3) The census provides a picture of the diversity of our population and the demography of our state. Certain groups are traditionally undercounted, including minorities, those with low incomes, the unemployed and the homeless. The current national economic crisis has moved more people into high-risk categories for the upcoming census.

Catherine Han Montoya of the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights (LCCR) spoke at



Catherine Han Montoya spoke at our Annual Meeting about civil rights implications of the 2010 U.S. Census. She listed a number of concerns for next year's count, including the use of new handheld enumerators that have not been tested as well as the difficulty of getting numbers for certain ethnic and racial groups and for those displaced by unemployment and home foreclosures.

According to Montoya, most large cities, which have traditionally invested significant money in the census effort, will not be able to do so because of the recession. She also noted there is no one at the helm at the Census Bureau. In April President Obama nominated Robert M. Groves, a University of Michigan sociologist and leading authority on survey

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2010 Census Timeline: Key Dates

Fall 2009

Recruitment begins for census takers needed for peak workload in 2010.

February – March 2010

Census questionnaires are mailed or delivered to households.

April 1, 2010

Census Day

April – July 2010

Census takers visit households that did not return a questionnaire by mail.

December 2010

Census Bureau delivers population counts to President for apportionment.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau website, 2010.census.gov

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President's Message

Melanie G. Ramey

I was delighted when my friend Constance Threinen won the 2009 Meg McLane Award for Advocacy, a tribute to her lifelong commitment to League values. It is very fitting that Connie receive this award, which honors Meg McLane, a long-time member of the Fond du Lac League and former chair of the state Legislative Committee who has moved to Ohio to be closer to family.



Connie joined the League in 1948 and founded the Middleton League, which subsequently merged to form the League of Women Voters of Dane County. She has served on the state Legislative Committee since the 1960s and has worked both professionally and as a volunteer to ensure women are treated equally at the University of Wisconsin and in our state.

Connie helped found the Wisconsin Women's Political Caucus in 1971 and served on its policy council until 1978. She then became a founder of the Wisconsin Women's Network and subsequently served several stints as its Chair. In 1977, Connie chaired the Wisconsin Conference on International Women's Year, which helped develop a Women's Agenda and National Plan of Action.

Since 1998, Connie has advocated a progressive approach to a broad range of issues, both as a Director of The Madison Institute and as its President since 2001. As a member of our Legislative Committee, she has doggedly advocated for a fair taxation system that will generate the revenue badly needed for a responsive and effective state government.

The Meg McLane Award honors the way Connie lives every day of her life. Wisconsin is better for the leadership she provides to the League and other organizations. ❖



Constance Threinen won the 2009 Meg McLane Award for Advocacy, a tribute to her lifelong commitment to League values.

2010 Census cont.

methodology, but his confirmation has been delayed in the Senate.

While the census aims to count every person living in the United States on April 1, 2010, Montoya is concerned that certain groups will not participate. In the post-9/11 era, many people are concerned that the information they give to one government agency may be used against them or their family by another.

Montoya's presentation was funded by The Joyce Foundation, which has provided a grant to the League of Women Voters of Wisconsin Education Fund for the collaborative *We Count! Wisconsin* project. The project promotes the message that participation in the census is good for you, your family and your community; that information you give the Census Bureau is confidential; and that if you mail in your completed form before the deadline, no one will come knocking at your door. By disseminating this information, the League is playing a pivotal role in getting an accurate count for our state in the 2010 Census. ❖

Delegates Move the League Forward at Annual Meeting

New Position

Following consensus on our 2007-2009 Election Administration Study, delegates revised our Voting Rights Position to reflect our support for:

- An adequately funded Statewide Voter Registration System (SVRS) to allow municipal and county clerks to perform their duties without additional undue financial burden.
- An early-voting system, primarily for presidential primary, presidential and gubernatorial elections, that provides for early ballots to be entered into voting machines for validation but not tallied until Election Day. The system should include security measures for the machines and an ample timeframe for poll lists to be updated. Multiple sites should be allowed at the discretion of municipalities.
- HAVA (Help America Vote Act)-required matching of the SVRS with other state data lists only for the purpose of improving the quality of the SVRS lists and not to determine voter eligibility.

The full Voting Rights position is available at www.lwwwi.org.

2009-2011 State Program

Through its new state program, which combines a state study, action on two priority issues and a participatory process to update our positions, the League will:

1. Conduct a two-year state study of issues related to selection of Supreme Court justices, including election vs. appointment and public financing of Supreme Court races.
2. Participate in coalitions on two statewide Action Campaigns:
 - Universal/affordable health care
 - Local and state government itemized agenda to deal with climate change and promote sustainability
3. Begin an ongoing process to update our positions and keep them relevant. Local Leagues are asked to consider reviewing positions identified in this year's program planning that are in need of updating (the state office can provide a list of these items) and circulate recommendations to local Leagues for comment by January 1, 2010. Recommended changes will then be submitted to the state office by February 28, in time for the state board to recommend consideration at the next Annual Meeting.

Delegates to the League's Annual Meeting in Manitowoc on May 29-30, 2009 updated our Voting Rights position, adopted a new two-year program, elected board members and adopted a one-year organizational budget to implement our work. Details are available at www.lwwwi.org and from the state office.

New Board

As specified in the bylaws, delegates elected two officers, three directors and two non-board members for the 2009-2010 Nominating Committee. In addition, at its May 29 meeting the state board appointed two new directors, Pat Finder-Stone and Joyce McCollum. See back page for a list of the 2009-2010 state board and Nominating Committee. President Ramey thanked the following directors who are leaving the state board: Diane Beres; Marilyn Boeldt; Clare McArdle; Nancy Moore; Earnestine Moss; Kathy Propp; and Marion Ruelle. The new board will hold its summer planning meeting July 17-18 in Ashland.

Budget

Delegates approved the Budget Committee's organizational budget, which includes the first dues increase since 2004. Per-member assessment to local Leagues will be increased from \$27 to \$30, and member-at-large dues from \$50 to \$60. Income from dues comprises approximately 16 percent of the annual budget. Grants, individual contributions and program revenues also provide income. In April the LWVWI Education Fund received the first payment of a two-year Joyce Foundation program grant of \$120,000 for a collaborative effort to develop a comprehensive political reform agenda for Wisconsin. In addition, the Otto Bremer Foundation recently awarded us a \$30,000 grant to strengthen membership in northwestern Wisconsin.

We are seeking ways to reduce costs while maintaining a professional level of service to members and local Leagues. Cost-cutting measures will include format changes to our newsletter. Contact the state office or a state board member if you would like to comment or request more information. ❖

Annual Meeting Workshops and Presentations Address Key Issues for State and Nation

Keynote Luncheon Focuses on Healthcare Reform

By Kathy Propp, LWV Winnebago County

The President and others are pushing for Congressional action in early August on major health care reform, according to luncheon keynote speaker LWVWI President Melanie Ramey, who handed out copies of *Focus on Health Reform: A Side-by-Side Comparison of Major Health Care Reform Proposals*, prepared by the Kaiser Family Foundation (www.kff.org/healthreform/sidebyside.cfm).

Ramey noted that the document includes eight plans and that a ninth from Senator Edward Kennedy is forthcoming. In addition, the U.S. Senate Finance Committee has issued three reports on cost comparisons of various reform proposals. The Wisconsin Collaborative for Healthcare Quality is a voluntary consortium of organizations working to improve quality and cost effectiveness of Wisconsin health care; their web site at www.wchq.org is an excellent resource.

Cost-saving reforms include:

- Reducing overused procedures such as C-sections and spinal fusions when not medically necessary.
- Implementing broader use of electronic medical records.
- Managing chronic diseases through the “medical home” model, where patients have a team headed by a family practice or internal medicine physician with ancillary professionals such as nurses, social workers and physical therapists.
- Providing an incentive for physicians to work longer evening and weekend hours through higher reimbursements, which could reduce costly emergency room visits.

Ramey pointed out that the United States spends twice as much as other industrialized countries on health care, yet the outcomes are no better. She noted that Canada and Great Britain have a two-tier system, with both national and private health insurance programs. Medicare’s public-private partnership model works well. She also said that with a national health insurance program there is no need for Medicaid, as all income levels are covered.

Options for Early Voting

By Kit O’Meara, LWV Milwaukee County

Edward Edney and Adam Harvell of the Government Accountability Board (GAB) presented research about true early voting and options for bringing it to Wisconsin during an Annual Meeting session on Friday, May 29.

True early voting occurs when a voter casts a ballot in a tabulating machine or other receptacle before Election Day. The GAB reviewed best practices around the country after large increases of in-person absentee voting in the 2008 election brought new concerns. The study was designed to improve the Wisconsin voter’s experience; protect the accuracy, security and privacy of the vote-count process, reduce administrative burdens on local election officials; and balance local and state interests. Best practices include:

- True early voting should only replace in-person absentee voting and not affect absentee voting by mail.
- Early votes cast should not be tabulated until Election Day.

GAB representatives discussed three options for true early voting in Wisconsin:

1. Regional districts consisting of counties and/or municipalities can offer early voting at designated locations. This option provides uniform access for voters interested in early voting but changes Wisconsin’s system of municipal-level control of elections.
2. Municipalities may opt into early voting as desired. This provides maximum flexibility for municipalities but will not lead to statewide uniformity. (Traditional methods of absentee voting would continue.)
3. Streamline the current in-person absentee-voting process without introducing true early voting. No absentee application is required, and the ballot is placed in a secure carrier to be fed into the voting machine and tabulated on Election Day.

For any of the options, the GAB recommends a limited pilot program for the April 2010 election. The GAB will seek public input at eight statewide meetings in July. For more information and to submit your thoughts, visit gab.wi.gov.

Redistricting Workshop

By Debra Cronmiller, LWV Appleton

Professor Ed Miller, UW-Stevens Point, co-chaired a committee appointed by the Wisconsin State Supreme Court that was charged with developing protocol for the Court to follow should the Legislature fail to create a redistricting plan for Wisconsin in a timely manner following the 2010 Census. The Court felt it necessary to take this action because the Legislature has not acted on redistricting without substantial court involvement since 1931.

The committee recommended that if the State Legislature had no plan in place by January 2, 2012 (and all subsequent 10-year increments), the Supreme Court should randomly draw one judge from each Court of Appeals District and a fifth judge from a statewide pool of Reserve Court Judges. Additionally, the committee made recommendations for potential scenarios when randomly drawn judges are unable to serve.

Despite what appears to be an impartial process for statewide redistricting, earlier this year, on a 3-4 decision, the Supreme Court chose to not accept the committee's recommendations, citing that the existence of such a plan might preclude the Legislature from acting. Furthermore, the Court deemed that if court intervention is needed, it is more appropriate for the Federal Court to be involved as Federal judges do not have to stand for election. ❖



GAB Election Specialist Steve Pickett trains statewide voter registrars.



LWV Milwaukee County Delegates

Glenda Alexander, Louise Petering, Carolyn Castore, Kit O'Meara, Joan Kreimendahl.

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Appleton: hosted forum on judicial independence featuring Supreme Court Justice Shirley Abrahamson; hosted webcast on transparency in government and freedom of information; registered more than 200 new voters; launched website.

Ashland/Bayfield: hosted forum on transitioning into green economy featuring speakers on food supply and energy; sponsored Dr. Jerene Mortenson, mother of author of *Three Cups of Tea*; hosted five voter forums; sponsored local recycling project focused on material flow and stumbling blocks businesses may encounter.

Beloit: registered voters; produced voter guides; co-hosted event assessing health of area families with Rock County Health Dept.; beginning work on energy assistance and public housing; collaborated with JOB (Justice Overcoming Borders) and Beloit Chamber of Commerce; committed to future collaborations with LWV Janesville.

Dane County: registered voters; created a Spanish version of voter guide through collaboration with local high school Spanish classes; advocated for implementation of 4-yr-old kindergarten; hosted forum on air quality.

Door County: grew from 33 to 43 members in past two years; hosted four educational forums; held voter registration and candidate forums; worked with local media; engaged in coalition with other groups; rejuvenated Observer Corps, which has led to relationships with the county board and invitation to serve on Complete Count Committee.

Greater Green Bay: presented results of local study on immigration to the Bay Area Community Council; performed outreach to neighborhood groups; held voter registration at several sites, including



League presidents present chapter achievements at the Annual Meeting.

Hispanic Fair; hosted two voter forums; worked on bringing citizenship process to Green Bay, site of a federal court.

Janesville: sponsored monthly programs called “Lunch & Learn,” with topics including juvenile justice system and poverty related to unemployment; focused on homeless teens, services to homeless men, and elementary schools with the highest percentage of children receiving free/reduced lunches and the struggles their families encounter.

La Crosse Area: focused on immigration concerns; continued to study healthcare for those with low incomes; helped organize Mission of Mercy, which provides free dental care; co-sponsored judicial independence forum; hosted forum on 21st century education.

Manitowoc: held four candidate forums; co-hosted 8-week “Great Decisions” series with over 100 attendees per session; completed two-year study on drug treatment courts and the viability in the county, with a focus on implementation.

Milwaukee County: hosted candidate forum with more than 150 people in attendance; registered voters at naturalization ceremonies and other events; produced voter guide for circuit court race; coordinated election night reporting in southeast Wisconsin; held meetings focused on healthcare, transit/RTA and crime in Milwaukee.

Ozaukee County: participated in 4th of July parade; conducted local study on care for elderly through collaboration with the County’s elderly and disabled center; sponsored forums in which 18 candidates presented their views; held voter registration; celebrated Women’s History Month with a dramatization of the life of Rachel Carson, author of *Silent Spring* and noted environmental activist.

Ripon Area: registered high school and college student voters; conducted candidate forums; continued local study of sustainability; moderated session with representatives from local government; distributed “Know Your Community” publication.

Stevens Point Area: adopted eco-municipality position and worked with city government; expanded study on sustainability; stimulated membership through election administration study; held Voting 101 for Hmong community; working on new website.

Whitewater Area: maintained mutually beneficial relationships with UW-Whitewater and city of Whitewater on programs recorded by local cable access channel; held two candidate forums and conducted voter registration; won first prize in 4th of July parade; held \$500 fundraising campaign for new website development and subsidized student memberships.

Winnebago County: merged LWV Neenah/Menasha & LWV Oshkosh; will continue to host forums in Neenah-Menasha; held Joyce Foundation redistricting forum (DVDs available through state office); held fundraiser featuring Joe Heller, political cartoonist for the *Green Bay Press Gazette*; collaborated with LWV Appleton.

Wisconsin Rapids Area: focused on sustainability; held informational forum and Natural Step study circles to establish action goals within the community; received grant from community foundation to purchase recycling containers and T-shirts for volunteers to publicize efforts at activities; held candidate forums. ❖

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 or all of the following (be sure to tell us which items you wish to receive by email):

- Forward Newsletter
- Wisconsin League Leader Update
- Action Alerts

Executive Director's Message



Andrea Kaminski

Upon accepting the Meg McLane Award for Advocacy at our Annual Meeting last month, Connie Threinen quoted former state League president Carol Gunderson who said, "Being a good citizen is hard work. The League of Women Voters makes it easier."

As I approach my fifth year with the state League, I am still in awe of how hard our members work on behalf of our democratic system and the League itself. I can't tell you how many times I have heard

members say that the League offers high-level discussion they can't find anywhere else and a unique opportunity to participate in nonpartisan advocacy that makes a difference. Yet, like other organizations, the League is having difficulty attracting new members and our numbers have declined in recent years.

The League's ability to provide nonpartisan voter education and maintain its credibility as an advocate for clean and responsive government relies on our strong base of engaged and supportive members. We need to reach out to people across Wisconsin who wish to be informed and active in their government at the local, state or national level. They may not be aware of the League's distinguished past or trusted reputation, yet they would welcome the opportunity to learn and contribute in "the organization that does its homework."

Earlier this year the League of Women Voters of Wisconsin Education Fund received a grant from the Otto Bremer Foundation to implement a membership development initiative. Funding is earmarked for communities in northwestern Wisconsin where Bremer Bank has branches. We will apply what we learn there to develop materials and procedures that can be used to assist all local Leagues and to attract members-at-large in communities that do not have a League. We'll also expand our outreach through an enhanced online presence and social networking.

The Bremer Foundation grant of \$30,000 provides generous up-front money to hire a part-time membership consultant and launch the initiative, but we need your help to fully implement the program. We are seeking to raise an additional \$30,000 specifically for this project, which will serve local Leagues and members statewide. It will also help keep the League a vital and relevant force for good in our communities and our state and help citizens be informed and active—the best way to ensure good government.

We hope you'll support the membership development initiative with a contribution in the enclosed envelope so we can bring the League experience to others—and make being a good citizen easier throughout the state. ❖



**LEAGUE OF
WOMEN VOTERS®
OF WISCONSIN
EDUCATION FUND**

Officers

Effective July 1, 2009

President: Melanie Ramey LWV Dane County 2009-2011	Treasurer: Ellen Rosborough LWV La Crosse Area 2008-2010
Vice President: Debra Cronmiller LWV Appleton 2008-2010	Secretary: Julie Arneith LWV Greater Green Bay 2009-2011

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Directors

Kathy Allen LWV Ashland/Bayfield Cos. 2008-2010	Linda Jorgenson LWV Ashland/Bayfield Cos. 2008-2010
Peggy Cox LWV Winnebago County 2008-2010	Joyce McCollum LWV Greater Green Bay 2009-2010
Patricia Finder-Stone LWV Greater Green Bay 2009-2011	Louise Petering LWV Milwaukee County 2009-2010
Ethel Himmel LWV Janesville 2009-2011	Pamela Rewey LWV Dane County 2009-2011

2009-2010 Nominating Committee:
Rebecca Dougherty, LWV Stevens Point Area
Ruth Kalms, Member-at-Large, Marshfield
State board member to be appointed

The League of Women Voters of Wisconsin Education Fund, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues and influences public debate through education and advocacy.



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