



# The League of Women Voters

of Appleton, Wisconsin

May 2005

Visit our website at [www.lwvappleton.org](http://www.lwvappleton.org)

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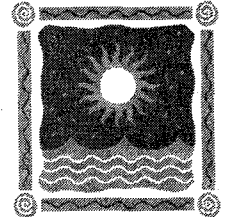
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# From Karen



## The President's Message

As the League year is winding down - Board members are busy, busy, busy! We are all preparing our final year reports for inclusion in the Annual Report to be delivered at our Annual Meeting on May 3. The Board of Directors will also finalize our letters for the local Finance Drive and will mail them out in April.

I met with in-coming President, Beth English, and over soft drinks (ugh!) we reviewed the current year's activities and determined that a high priority for next year is increased League visibility and a concepted membership drive.

It has been a pleasure serving as League President this year. I have had the pleasure of working with a superb Board and have enjoyed getting to know many members.

The 2005-2006 Board of Directors will serve our League well but they will need our active involvement. Make a commitment now "to step up to the plate." Volunteer your expertise, time and talent and please consider a donation to League when your Finance Drive letter arrives. Your generosity will be most appreciated and will be wisely spent.

## League Calendar

Date	Event	Meeting Place
Tuesday, May 3	LWV Appleton Annual Meeting	Mark's East Side 1405 E Wisconsin Ave Appleton
Saturday, June 3-4	LWV State Convention	Janesville

Thanks again for the opportunity to serve. Enjoy your summer and I hope to see many of you at our first Fall meeting.

Karen

## ***LAST CHANCE!!***

### **Annual Meeting and Dinner**

**May 3, 2005**

Mark's East Side

1405 East Wisconsin Ave., Appleton

5:30 p.m. Social Hour with cash bar

6:00 p.m. Dinner

6:45 p.m. Annual Meeting

There still is time to call Carolyn Mewhorter, 739-0000, to make a reservation!!

### **2004-2005 PCB Disposal Study LWV – River Leagues Recommendation**

4/11/05

Approved by LWV of Appleton Board 4/19/05

PCB's are a concern for everyone who has contact with the Fox River. Over the past years, to address this concern, the Wisconsin DNR, after much research and ample opportunity for public input, has issued a Record of Decision that seeks immediate removal of the PCB laden sediment in parts of the Fox River most heavily contaminated and a combination of other means of remediation, both capping and natural attenuation, for less contaminated portions.

In 2001, the four Leagues along the Fox River, joined together in a unique study to form a PCB consensus position regarding the quality of the water in the Fox River. In this ground breaking study, the four River Leagues agreed that landfilling the dredged sediment was the only economically viable option. Today, nearly five years later, emerging technologies are being developed that caused the study committee to reconvene for consideration of the disposal options for the dredged sediment contaminated with PCBs.

During this 2004-2005 Multi-League study, information was gathered regarding the new technology developed by Minergy of vitrification or incineration of the sediment at extremely high temperatures (approximately 3000 degrees) to destroy the PCB molecule in an environmentally sound manner leaving only an inert glass aggregate by-product. After hearing from Minergy, experts from both the Clean Water Action Council and the Wisconsin DNR were entertained to present their viewpoints regarding the viability of Minergy's process, its cost estimates, the environmental soundness of the process, and other potential concerns having to do with the vitrification process.

The study committee has agreed that the current position drafted in 2001 should be modified to incorporate the consideration of options beyond landfilling the dredge. The following proposed amendment is presented to all four Leagues for consideration and acceptance:

**PCB Clean Up Position  
LWV - Fox River Leagues  
Proposed Amendment presented for Consensus**

The River Leagues (Appleton, Green Bay, Neenah-Menasha and Oshkosh) believe that the Fox River has and continues to be an important natural, recreational and economic resource for all area residents and the state of Wisconsin. The League believes that the public must be allowed meaningful and frequent comment regarding PCB activities which influence the area's water and land resources.

We support the effort to decrease the concentration of PCB's in the Fox River using site appropriate methods. Further, we support site specific, on-going monitoring of the river's water quality with periodic review of the implemented clean-up option for effectiveness.

We believe the clean-up project should be conducted by the state and the paper companies in a collaborative venture based on a mutually accepted long-term plan.

We believe the cost of the clean-up should be borne by the responsible parties and all available state and federal grant dollars.

Pending statewide LWV study and concurrence, we support a state water quality tax, similar to the forestry tax, to improve the state's water resources and to provide a predictable, dependable and equitable funding source.

While we currently believe the most economical way to dispose of sediments containing less than 50 ppm PCB's is in segregated appropriately engineered landfills close to the Fox River, we support the continued consideration of emerging technologies such as vitrification for sediments with higher toxicity. We believe that local governments along the Fox River should allow the development of such landfills for the sole purpose of disposal of PCB contaminated soil until new technologies are proven viable, cost effective and environmentally sound. We support molecule destruction over encapsulation whenever cost effective and environmentally sound technology is available.

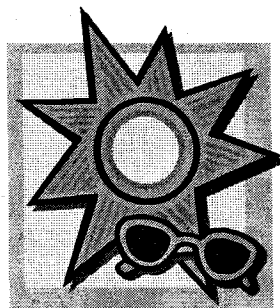
We support the state's on-going assumption of liability for government owned landfills designated for this purpose.

We support that restitution funds for damages to the Fox River's environment be used for the primary purpose of wetland restoration, shoreline improvements, and public riverfront acquisition.

## **Membership Brochure**

Winnie Doxie has designed a new membership brochure. One is enclosed for you to give to someone.

This is the last LWV Bulletin you will receive until September. **Have a great summer!!**



**LWVIW Education Study 2003-2005**  
**Education Committee Final Recommended Positions**  
**Approved by Board of Directors 3/12/05**

**Introduction on alternative forms of and challenges to education**

*"I have indeed two great measures at heart, without which no republic can maintain itself in strength:*

- 1. That of general education, to enable every man to judge for himself what will secure or endanger his freedom.*
- 2. To divide every county into hundreds, of such size that all the children of each will be within reach of a central school in it."*

*—Thomas Jefferson, 1810*

Public education is a foundation for our democratic society. Leaders of the United States, as far back as Thomas Jefferson, understood that the very health and strength of the country was dependent on public education. Public schools prepared the people to be knowledgeable in their role as voting citizens. It was also public schools that integrated immigrants into American society and created a commitment to a common heritage. More recently we have asked public schools to take a greater role in preparing children for college as well as for the workforce. Public schools remain the one place in our society where children of different backgrounds have the opportunity to interact.

Starting with the publication of *A Nation at Risk* in the early 1980's, there has been a rising chorus of critics attacking public education. These attacks have begun to undermine the faith of the average citizen in the very institution of public education. Rather than focus on ways to improve and strengthen those public schools that have problems, much of the recent public discussion has focused on alternatives to public education.

This League study has looked at some of the alternatives to traditional public education that exist in the state of Wisconsin: Milwaukee private school choice, charter schools, virtual schools and home schools. The charge to the committee was to look at these, and the federal No Child Left Behind legislation, in terms of their impact on public schools in the state.

**Position Statement**

**Committee Recommended position:**

*Support of a system of state elementary and secondary education which includes:*

*Require all institutions or organizations that receive public funds for K-12 education to meet the same requirements as public schools, including:*

- Accounting for the use of public funds;*
- Meeting performance standards for their students;*
- Meeting the same state standards for all school employees.*

There was almost unanimous agreement that any individual or private company contracting to provide public education as is the case for some virtual schools, and any private or parochial school that receives public funds by participating in the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program, should be required to publicly account for the use of those funds. Financial accounting requirements should be the same as that required of K-12 public schools. It is suggested that yearly audits be made available to the public. Although there is more financial accountability for schools in the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program through Act 155 than there was in the past, it is not comparable to what is required of public schools.

Although all charter school students at this time are public school students and are accountable to the same academic testing requirements as students in traditional schools, there are no academic measurement requirements for private or parochial school students. There was strong consensus among League units that publicly funded students in private and parochial schools should be held to the same achievement standards as their counterparts in public schools.

Employees of Wisconsin schools that receive public funds should meet the same state standards as those required of all public school employees. "All school employees" includes instructional and support employees. This refers to certification of instructional employees as well as, for instance, criminal background checks on any employees for which this is required in public education.

**Committee Recommended Position:**

***Charter school authority should be given only to K-12 public school districts to maintain Wisconsin's commitment to local control of K-12 public education.***

Approximately two thirds of the Leagues endorsed the above position. The democratic structure of K-12 public schools provides for a school board elected by the registered voters who are residents of the school district. This system allows for public accountability and control. There were some LWVWI members and Leagues who felt that it was appropriate for colleges and universities to serve as a chartering authority. However, the governing structure of colleges, universities and technical schools with appointed boards and officials, allow for less direct public control and accountability. School districts are encouraged to cooperate with other organizations, institutions, and agencies while maintaining chartering authority.

At the current time the funding of the schools chartered by the institutions other than K-12 school district boards, comes from a negative proportional deduction in the state aids sent to each school district in the state. Therefore financially strapped school districts are affected by the cost of the independently chartered schools. Local school districts are allowed to make up the reduction in their state aid by increasing the school tax levy in their community within the revenue limit formula.

## **Home schooling**

Although there was no consensus on recommendations for requirements regarding home schooling, there was support among leagues for greater oversight of home schooling. Responses were equally divided on qualification guidelines for the person providing home school instruction. There was stronger support for requiring some form of record keeping and assessment of student learning in order to ensure the child is in a safe and educationally stimulating environment.

There was no consensus among Leagues on how regulations if any should be enforced. Regarding enforcement, there was sentiment toward shared responsibility between the Department of Public Instruction and local school districts. In the discussion of new requirements of home schooling programs, it was recalled that private schools are also lacking these same kinds of control. Because of the lack of consensus there are no suggestions for new positions relative to home schooling at this time.

## **No Child Left Behind**

The Education Study committee was directed to study the effect of the "No Child Left Behind Act". The NCLB act requires all students to be proficient in reading and math assessments by 2013-14. Also schools and districts must meet annual targets for the percent of students at or above the proficient level, with those targets rising over time for all students and for subgroups of students who are poor, speak limited English, have disabilities, or come from racial or ethnic minority backgrounds.

Local leagues were requested to conduct a survey of local school districts to determine the effects of this law. Twenty-five local leagues conducted interviews with school district personnel. The results of these interviews are summarized in the Committee's report "Impact of Alternative Forms of Education and No Child Left Behind Act on Public K-12 School Systems". This report can be found at the LWVWI's web site.

Most districts felt that there were some positive qualities of the Federal legislation but also felt that the legislation restricted local control, was not adequately funded, and needed more flexibility regarding student assessments. The State Department of Public Instruction had to comply with the Federal regulations in making the state plan. Wisconsin's implementation plan was approved by the Department of Education and then Wisconsin received the federal funds for Title I.

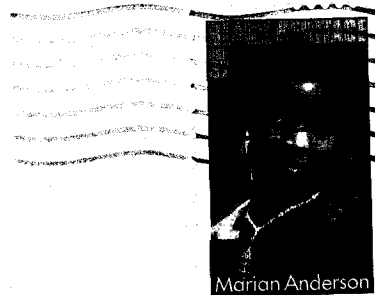
Some local leagues requested a consensus questions regarding NCLB. Since this is Federal legislation, Leagues must use LWVUS positions to lobby for changes in the legislation. LWVWI could act on most state legislative requirements because of the LWVWI's position on local control by School Boards.

# Annual Meeting - May 3, 2005

## Mark's East Side



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