

The *informed* Voter



League of Women Voters of Appleton, Wisconsin

"Serving the citizens of the Appleton Area & Outagamie County"

February 21, 2013

Calendar of Events

February

- Feb 26, Library Study update meeting for all LWV members. Appleton Public Library. 4pm-6pm.
- Feb 28, movie Patriocracy viewing, Menasha Public Library, 5pm

March

- March 5 Lunch and Learn, 11:30-1:30 PM
- March 7, LWV Board Meeting, 9:00 AM, Gardens of the Fox Cities

April

- April 2 Lunch and Learn, 11:30-1:30 PM

May

- May 16, LWV Appleton Annual Meeting and Dinner, 5:30-8:30PM



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February Event

Our Local Study: information for all members!

**The Library of the Future
Tuesday, Feb 26**

4 pm to 6 pm at

Appleton Public Library

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Greetings Everyone!!!

There will be much to read in this newsletter so I simply direct you to pore over the articles. Media Events , Lunch and Learn Luncheons, Library Study, Legislative Action Items, Membership Drive, and gearing up for Election Activities...we have been engaged and will continue with high energy level and commitment from league members! Help us keep the fires burning!!

Shirley Strange
February 2013

Anniversary Committee: The Anniversary Steering Committee met Friday to begin brainstorming ideas for the Appleton League's 75th Anniversary Celebration in 2014. We have some wonderful preliminary ideas and will be laying them out in the next few months. If you have ideas, please feel free to submit them to the committee, Sue Eich, Marcia Hittle, Carolyn Mewhorter, Irene Strohbeen, Shirley Strange. The committee will be growing as we contact individuals for help in specific areas. We want this to be spectacular so no holds barred.

In Memoriam: Corinne Goldgar died on December 23, 2012. All who were in League with Corinne remember her bold leadership, high intelligence and fearless action supporting issues. Corinne was president of the League of Women Voters of Appleton from 1971-72. We salute Corinne her for her good work and outstanding leadership. The following is taken from the League Bulletin May, 1972. Corinne's pseudonym: "Whatsername".

LETTER FROM WHATSHERNAME

Those people who doubt that League is a real grassroots organization and those people who insist that League is directed from the "top" ought to come to an Annual Meeting of the Appleton LWV. For the second year in a row, the members present at our Annual Meeting chose an item for local study other than the one recommended by the Board. This is fine, but it means that you can't assume how things are going to go or what decisions are going to be made. You have to be at the Annual Meeting if you want to be in on the real decision making.

I think it was a good Annual Meeting, and I thank Joan Heiden who made all the arrangements. We had good attendance. We had lively discussion. We had good food -- proving once more that Leaguers can not only study and lobby, but they can also cook like something from Cordon Bleu. And, last but not least, we finished our business before we turned into pumpkins.

* MEMBERSHIP MEETING *

Local Study on the Appleton Public Library

Tuesday, February 26, 4 – 6 PM at the APL Lower Level

Our League is very fortunate that the local study to update our positions on the APL coincides with planning for a future library being carried out by the staff and Board of Directors of the APL and the Friends of APL. One step in their process has been to hold Community Conversations with representatives of many diverse groups in Appleton to learn what people think of Appleton, their hopes for Appleton's future and how APL can help realize their hopes. In this issue of The Informed Voter Colleen Rortvedt, the APL Director, describes the results of these Community Conversations.

At the membership meeting on February 26 Colleen will provide a tour of the library and give a presentation on 21st Century libraries. Later this spring, League members will be invited to hear guest speakers who will describe how global trends, societal changes and technology might affect the future for libraries. Two of these sessions are tentatively scheduled for the afternoons of March 21 and April 10. Details will follow but for now mark your calendars.

Local Study *Miriam Douglass, Chair*

Community Conversations About The library

By Colleen Rortvedt, Appleton Public Library Director

In the spring of 2012 the Appleton Public Library (APL) and the Friends of Appleton Public Library (Friends of APL) began a series of conversations throughout Appleton. We scheduled meetings in accessible locations in various Aldermanic districts at various times including afternoons, nights and weekends.

While the conversations were meant to ultimately inform APL in planning for the future, the approach we took was to start by asking people open ended questions about the things that they are experts in, which is the community in general and their personal experiences.

The process was facilitated by Jan Quinlan, the Friends of APL Executive Director, who is also a skilled facilitator. She ensured that we heard everyone and we structured the meetings to give people with different processing and communication styles the chance to think about the questions and participate. Each session was transcribed by UW Green Bay honor students from the Center for Public Affairs.

As each conversations progressed to providing specific recommendations about the library, I provided a brief presentation about 21st century libraries and how they are evolving to meet new needs while still fulfilling essentially the same mission we always have. After this presentation participants were asked to think about everything they had heard and seen and provide recommendations specifically for how the library might help realize these hopes for the future. We repeated this process in the fall with six more conversations including special ones for parents, the business community, teens, diverse populations and "library insiders" – the core group of volunteers and regular patrons who pay close attention to the library and the services we provide.

The conversations were divided into three parts:

1. What do people think of Appleton now?
2. What are their hopes for Appleton's future?
3. How can Appleton Public Library help realize their hopes?

Our goal was to find common threads and shared priorities that will help APL in our long range planning.

What have we learned? What do people think of Appleton now? One participant summarized a theme that we heard repeatedly – “We are a goldilocks community.”

- We’re not too small, not too big – we are just right. We are big enough to offer urban amenities but small enough that people know each other and care.
- We are progressive, but conservative with a rich history of innovation that serves as the foundation to many of the anchors in the community.
- Community leaders are accessible and there is a spirit of giving and volunteerism that particularly those who have lived elsewhere noted that this is something they haven’t experienced in the other places they lived.

Participants hopes for the future for Appleton came through clearly - Don’t lose the good things we have!

This was clearly a shared priority, even in the teen focus group. There was genuine concern, particularly because of the economy, that the wonderful things we have - our caring neighborhoods, safety, education system, high quality healthcare and relative economic stability could all be in jeopardy if we take them for granted and don’t continue to invest in them.

An interesting contrast came up where in talking about their future hopes for Appleton participants constantly brought up the importance of a vibrant downtown that embraces big city amenities but they also want to remain connected to nature and specifically the river. Accessibility to natural resources and manmade structures will be an interesting mix of priorities that will have implications on the accessibility of the library and the quality of space. One participant put it like this -- “The library needs to serve as the anchor for community, strong central downtown library that’s easy to access by bike, walk, and public transportation.”

What is the community vision for the future of Appleton Public Library? The Library should be a community anchor and community leader.

By far the greatest number of comments referred to this vision of the library as an organization that facilitates community participation. It’s a place where people of all generations and all walks of life can come together. It’s a place that is networked with other entities including government, education, other community centers and small businesses. The theme of the library as a third place and a place to gather was repeated over and over.

Finally, the library was asked to continue its role as a place to learn – whether enhancing opportunities available through formal education, or through offering opportunities for lifelong learning the library was continually encouraged to continue the work it has provided for over a century and find ways to enhance this role. Technology plays a huge role here and the value of technology to bring us together and inspire creativity opens up the door for libraries to offer opportunities for exploration and innovation in ways that still align with the long-term mission of libraries, but in new ways.

One participant instructed us to “Look toward the future with a foot in the past.”

Throughout our Community Conversations we received wonderful coverage by the media and had a wide range of participants including 10 Alderpersons, 2 School Board Members and 1 state representative. In all, over 130 people participated in a Community Conversation about the Library. We are going to return this spring with one more round of Community Conversations and fill in any remaining gaps to be sure we hear from dads, big businesses, the creative community and people who disagree with us.

This spring we are going to continue talking about the future by bringing in guest speakers who will speak to us about how global trends, societal changes and technology could affect the future for libraries. We will take trips to a couple of libraries that are providing 21st century service and we will ultimately create a long range plan to guide us into the future with the help of a Community Advisory Committee that represents the diverse constituencies that we serve. We invite you to attend the presentations about the future of the library that we are hosting this spring and we hope that you continue to follow along with what we are doing and provide your own thoughts about priorities and the potential future for Appleton Public Library.



Voter Service by Irene Strohbeen

Media Event for Election Day Voter Registration(EDR)

On January 15, LWV-Appleton and Citizen Action of Wisconsin co-sponsored a Media Event in support of Election Day Registration. The event was a huge success, with all local media present—all four television stations, WHBY and the Post-Crescent—and over 50 people attending. Numerous people spoke, including Mayor Hanna, Anita Johnson from Citizen Action-WI, Marcia Engen who spoke from the perspective of a poll worker, and Cathy Thompson speaking as a poll observer. Shirley Strange moderated the event and read a statement written by City Clerk Charlene Peterson about the importance of maintaining EDR in controlling costs, minimizing the number of provisional ballots, and allowing eligible voters to vote. Irene Strohbeen provided the LWV statement addressing the impact of EDR on WI's high voter turnout, estimated to increase turnout by at least 10%. (My LWV statement is included on the following page.)

LWV Report on November 2012 Poll Observations

LWV-WI has released the report summarizing the results from poll observers across the state for the fall elections on November 6 2012. Overall, the observers reported a smoothly-run election with professional and dedicated election officials ensuring the polls were welcoming, safe, and orderly. Voting administration was clearly improved in comparison to the June recall election, with better training and tools for poll workers regarding the election laws and regulations.

Click on this link to access the full report: [click here](#)

Wisconsin is a Leader in Elections

The Pew Center on the States has recently issued a report citing Wisconsin as the #1 state in 2008 and #8 in 2010 on their Election Performance Index which is based on a variety of metrics concerning election administration. Factors contributing to WI's high rankings included:

- Consistently high voter turnout
- Low rates of voters being turned away due to registration or absentee ballot problems
- Minimal provisional ballots, and
- Relatively short waiting time in lines

These results can be strongly linked to ability of voters to access specific individualized voting information online using <https://myvote.wi.gov/>, the GAB's voter public access website where people can check their registration status, polling place location, elected officials, and voting districts. WI is one of only 6 states that provide this important information to voters online. Another aspect of WI's election administration is its decentralized local control of elections, citing the almost 2,000 municipal and county clerks as a major strength in how elections are run.

LWV Statement for Media Event January 15, 2013

The League of Women Voters was established in 1920 to protect the Right to Vote with the passage of the 19th amendment for women's suffrage. It is disturbing to the League that further attacks on voter access are continuing with discussion about eliminating Same Day Voter Registration. In this day and age when voter turnouts in the US are the lowest among 1st-world democracies, more should be done to promote voting, rather than taking actions that might discourage voters from casting a ballot.

For Presidential elections, the typical voter turnout across the country is a paltry 62% of eligible voters. According to the Center for Voting and Democracy, this is because almost 1 out of 3 eligible voters is not registered to vote. For those of you keeping track, the math works out—data also shows that 95% of those registered voters will turn out to vote. So, logic would say that helping eligible voters to register will increase voter turnout. And, obviously 100% of voters who register on Election Day will vote—which clearly works to boost turnout.

This past November, Wisconsin had the 2nd highest voter turnout in the nation, with 72.5% of eligible voters voting, exceeded only by Minnesota at 75.7%. Professor Ostermeier from University of Minnesota cites Same Day Registration as a key reason for WI's high voter turnout: according to Dr. Ostermeier, "Same day registration is the biggest factor in generating high voter turnout as it generates a possible voter increase of 10 percent." It is clear that reducing and eliminating barriers to voting access are necessary to get eligible voters to vote—in a nutshell, the key to turnout is to make it easy and convenient for busy people to register and to vote.

So, we ask Why would anyone want to eliminate Same Day Registration here in WI when it is viewed so positively among those who study elections? Governor Walker cites overworked poll workers; we have heard from our city clerk, Char Hanson, who says that poll workers are not stressed by SDR. To echo her comments, the LWV had over 300 volunteer observers at polling places across the state on November 6, and we found that the vast majority of poll workers were committed to helping people to register and vote—that's why they are there working at the polls. From my personal experience observing at a busy polling place here in Appleton, the poll workers were very helpful in getting people registered quickly so that they were able to vote.

Democracy works when eligible voters are able to exercise their right to vote. This means all eligible voters, including those who work 60+ hours per week, have school-aged kids, soccer practices, piano lessons, swim class and all the other activities that create today's busy lifestyles. It also includes those young people and students who are notorious for procrastination—do we want to deny them their vote because they didn't plan ahead? Eliminating Same Day Registration is a strike against all these Busy People, Young People and others, and we can't allow this attack on voting to be even considered in our state Legislature. We need to make sure that our elected representatives in Madison focus on jobs and our economy, not attacks on voting rights.

Lunch and Learn 2013

The first *Lunch and Learn* speaker on February 5, brought 38 people together at the Radisson Paper Valley to hear corporate anthropologist Jane An Morris talk about government and the constitution. Jane Anne is the author of [Gaveling Down the Rabble: How "Free Trade" is Stealing Our Democracy](#). She lives in Madison and continues to do research and write articles. In her talk, Jane Anne, pointed out how legislation has been affected by the Commerce Clause; Article 1, Section 8, Clause 3 of the Constitution, "the provision of the U.S. Constitution that gives Congress exclusive power over trade activities among the states and with foreign countries and Indian tribes." There was an interesting discussion about the constitution, the mining bill in the legislature, Supreme Court decisions, the Clean Water Act, and Native American treaties.

Jane Anne's website is <http://democracythemepark.org>

Please join us at the next Lunch and Learn gathering.

Lunch and Learn
Appleton League of Women Voters
Tuesday, MARCH 5, 2013

Radisson Paper Valley in Lawrence Room

11:30 am-1:30 pm

Speakers:

Cindy Sahotsky, Executive Director, COTS, Inc
Oren Jakobson, Riverview Gardens Manager

Topic:

COTS and Riverview Gardens
Building Community Stewardship
\$17.00

Your choice of 4 Entrees
Including coffee, tea, milk, tax, and tip

RSVP by Friday, March 1,
Sara Companik 731-0663 or scompanik@yahoo.com

A Program reminder from Sara:

The movie *Patriocracy* will be shown on Thursday, February 28, 2013, 5 p.m., at the Menasha Public Library. The movie is sponsored by LWV Winnebago County. Coffee, water and cookies will be available. *Patriocracy* explores the extreme polarization in America that cripples the country from tackling its most serious problems.

More money than ever was spent on the 2012 election season and *Patriocracy* sits in the dead center of this monumental tug-of-war, educating viewers so they do not fall victim to manipulation whenever they cast ballots.

Observer Corps *by Sara Companik*

AASD Board meets at 7 p.m. every other Monday

Appleton City Council meets at 7 p.m. every other Wednesday

Outagamie County Board meets at 6:30 p.m. every other Tuesday

Refer to the individual websites for further information.

AASD: www.aasd.k12.us/Schoolboard/

Appleton City Council: www.appleton.org

Outagamie County Board: www.outagamie.org

The Appleton League of Women Voters can use the help of its members to observe at the Appleton City Council meeting, the Outagamie County Board meeting or the Appleton Area School meeting sometime during the League calendar year. League visibility all year long keeps the Appleton League vital to the community as a watchdog group, an outreach group, and a citizen action group. The following League members have signed up to observe at these government meetings. Would you consider joining in? [Contact Sara Companik.](#)



Legislative News *by Penny Robinson*

NATURAL RESOURCES – LWVWI has registered in opposition to AB 1/SB 1, the mining bill. LWVWI submitted a statement to the hearing and sent an Action Alert to members. Both bills have been voted out of committee and now go to the Joint Finance Committee. Watch for Joint Finance Committee hearings around the state.

DEPT. OF CORRECTIONS - The League strongly supports the expansion of Treatment Alternative Diversion(TAD) programs, as now envisioned in the “11X15” project which has been proposed and developed by the Human Impact Partners in collaboration with WISDOM (a Wisconsin network of faith based organizations). The “11X15” project would commit \$75 million to alternatives for non-violent offenders with the outcome an actual reduction in prison population which means a savings of tax dollars.

More information in Melanie Ramey’s letter to the governor, as well as <http://esther-foxvalley.org/content/join-us-march-14th-people-faith-madison-action-day> (to register for Madison Action Day cosponsored by Wisconsin Council of Churches, Interfaith Conference of Greater Milwaukee, Milwaukee Jewish Federation, Lutheran Office for Public Policy, WISDOM, and Madison Area Urban Ministry) and <http://prayforjusticeinwi.org/>

From LWV US:

LWVUS Urges Senate to Ratify CEDAW

The LWVUS joined over 100 organizations in sending [a letter](#) to the U.S. Senate urging ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). CEDAW is a landmark international agreement that affirms principles of fundamental human rights and equality for women around the world.

STATE BOARD ASKS LOCAL LEAGUES TO WEIGH IN ON POLICY POSITIONS

The State Board is asking local Leagues to help update and review positions on redistricting, administration of justice, and natural resources to insure the positions remain relevant and useful for advocacy.

Redistricting - These proposed revisions by the LWVWI legislative committee will go to the State Board for consideration and then to local Leagues in the Annual Meeting packet. Delegates at the Annual Meeting should be prepared to vote on these revisions. Insertions are underscored.

Support of:

- Regularly scheduled apportionment based primarily on population equality, but also with consideration of the compactness and contiguity of districts; representation of diverse populations; and, insofar as is possible, recognition of community of interest as defined by town, village, city, county or ward boundaries and major geographical characteristics. A redistricting process characterized by objectivity, accountability, timely and efficient completion and a reasonable degree of flexibility.
- Citizen participation and access at all levels and steps of the process.
- Establishment of an independent commission or designation of an independent agency to be responsible for the development of a legislative and Congressional redistricting plan.
- Provide for streamlined court review of any legal challenge.

Additional deletions and more information in LWVWI Feb 2013 newsletter at:

<http://www.lwvwi.org/NewsEvents/QuarterlyNewsletterAnnualReport.aspx>

Administration of Justice – judicial selection

The state League committee has found that a) the current position is unclear; and b) many League members are confused as to what the League's position is on appointment vs. election of justices. The committee sent an online survey to local Leagues in January. More information at LWVWI Feb 2013 newsletter at

<http://www.lwvwi.org/NewsEvents/QuarterlyNewsletterAnnualReport.aspx>

Natural Resources

The State Board wants to know if there are people who would be able to help conduct a review of a few parts of the positions of most interest to members for review in the 2013-2014 League year.

SAVE THE DATE – ANNUAL MEETING – June 7-8, 2013, Hilton Milwaukee City Center, Milwaukee

The following is the LWWUS letter to the Governor on the budget, included in its entirety:

February 7, 2013

Governor Scott Walker
115 East Capitol
Madison, WI 53702
Dear Governor Walker:

We are writing to urge you to support a budget bill that provides funding to increase access to health care programs, to improve public transit, and to further develop alternatives to incarceration. These actions will lay a solid foundation for long-term sustainability in the state of Wisconsin.

BadgerCare. BadgerCare is a successful program which already provides for essential health care services for low income residents of Wisconsin. Now it can be expanded largely with federal dollars to include thousands more individuals and families who are currently waiting for access to quality and affordable health care.

Expanding the BadgerCare program is good for Wisconsin's economy. Having health insurance helps people to achieve upward mobility and become economically self-sustaining. People with health coverage are able to obtain preventive care, and that can make them more attractive as job candidates. Expanding BadgerCare also will create thousands of new health care jobs in the state, especially benefiting women.

The League urges you to accept the federal money available to provide increased access to affordable health care, and to create a healthier and more productive Wisconsin workforce.

Family Care. Family Care is a Wisconsin program that gives seniors the opportunity to receive long-term care services at home, where they want to be, instead of at costly institutions. This saves tens of thousands of dollars per person and brings about better health care outcomes by closely tailoring services to the needs of the individuals. The program is very efficient in that almost 95% of the money spent goes directly to client services. We support the expansion of funding in the 2013-2015 budget so that seniors and disabled persons in all counties of the state can access this popular and cost-effective program.

Mental Health. We are especially pleased to see your emphasis on increasing the mental health budget, and we suggest that this money be applied to an increase in community based services for persons with mental illness. Poor access to appropriate mental health services can lead to significant unfavorable personal and societal outcomes, such as poorer health, unemployment, homelessness, and increased suicide rates. Ensuring access to necessary mental health services for individuals and families can help prevent many such negative consequences. We urge you to give high priority to funding for community support programs that provide quality mental health care services for people with mental illnesses in Wisconsin.

Transportation. We urge you to accept the recommendation of the Wisconsin Transportation Finance and Policy Commission to budget an additional \$36.3 million in annual investment over a 10-year period to improve public transit. This is a small part of the transportation budget, but it makes a huge difference for people who rely on public transit to get to jobs, interviews, work, child care, government agencies, shopping and other daily business. A modern, efficient system of public transit will help grow Wisconsin's economy, because it attracts young professionals to our communities and helps prevent air pollution and traffic congestion.

Department of Corrections. The League of Women Voters continues to urge support for further development and reliance on alternatives to incarceration. As we watch the unsustainable, ever-growing budget of the Department of Corrections, now costing us more than the entire University system, it is apparent that changes must be made.

One of the positive changes would be an increase in funding for Treatment Alternatives and Diversions (TAD). In 2007, state funding established pilot programs in seven counties. For about a million dollars a year, through drug and alcohol courts, treatment centers and other initiatives, twice that amount in criminal justice costs was saved. The recent evaluation report of TAD programs pronounces this a very successful effort resulting in lowered jail and prison populations and a lowered rate of repeat crimes. This evaluation was done by the Office of Justice Assistance with an advisory committee of people from the Department of Corrections, law enforcement personnel, judges and others connected with the criminal justice system.

The League strongly supports the expansion of those earlier TAD programs, as now envisioned in the “11X15” project which has been proposed and developed by the Human Impact Partners in collaboration with WISDOM (a Wisconsin network of faith based organizations). The “11X15” project would commit \$75 million to alternatives for non-violent offenders with the outcome an actual reduction in prison population which means a savings of tax dollars.

Just as education funding can be based on successful practices, certainly the successful practices of our Corrections system should be rewarded as well. The “11X15” project is an opportunity to finally make a meaningful and practical investment in our Wisconsin Corrections system that will be a benefit to all. We urge you to include this project in your proposed budget.

Thank you for your attention to these important issues. We remind you that they are key to ensuring Wisconsin’s quality of life and economic well being.

Sincerely,



Melanie G. Ramey
President



Your Representatives

President Barack Obama

president@whitehouse.gov

US Senators

Wisconsin Senator: Tammy Baldwin

Wisconsin Senator: Ron Johnson

US House Representatives

6th Congressional District, Thomas Petri of Outagamie County

8th Congressional District, Reid Ribble of Outagamie County.

Governor: Scott Walker
Lt. Governor: Rebecca Kleefisch
Attorney General: J.B. Van Hollen
Secretary of State: Doug La Follette

Wisconsin State Senators:

Senate District 19 – Michael Ellis

Wisconsin State Assembly

57th - Penny Bernard Schaber

56th – David Murphy

40th - Kevin Petersen

6th - Gary Tauchen

5th - Jim Steineke

3rd - Alvin Ott

search <http://waml.legis.state.wi.us/Index.aspx>

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