



# THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF MILWAUKEE COUNTY

## League Lines

MARCH/APRIL 2006

### Calendar

414-273-8683  
www.milwaukee-voters.org

#### March

6 Mon.-7:00-9:00p.m.

Natural Resource Committee Mtg.

**Topics: Energy, Great Lakes Water**

Jennifer Runquist's home

3002 E. Kenwood Blvd., Milwaukee

Contact: Jennifer Runquist, 414/332-5067

6 Mon.-7:15-9:00p.m.

Internat'l Relations Committee Mtg.

**Grt Decisions Topic: UN Peace Building**

Doris Zwickey's, 414/258-2589

633 N. 93rd St., Milwaukee

Contact: Marianne Steigerwald, 414/476-9272

8 Wed.-6:00p.m.

**Board Meeting**

Washington Park Library

Contact: Karen Campbell, 414/774-5944

13 Mon.-7:15-9:00p.m.

Internat'l Relations Committee Mtg.

**Grt Decisions Topic: Energy**

Gloria Weiskotten's, 414/354-9783

8973 N. 70th St., Milwaukee

Contact: Marianne Steigerwald, 414/476-9272

14 Wed.-10:00a.m.-2:00p.m.

**What Are You Planning Today for Tomorrow?**

ProHealth, Laureate, & Senior Planning Grps

Contact: Diane Olson, 414/873-5190

16 Thur.-6:30-8:30p.m.

**Candidate Forum, Greendale Village Board**

High School Multi-Purpose Room

6801 Southway

Contact: Marilyn Boeldt, 414/444-2111

16 Thur.-7:00p.m.

**Candidate Forum, Brown Deer Village Board**

Brown Deer Library, 5600 W. Bradley Rd.

Contact: Fran Swigart, 414/962-8984

18 Wed. Unit Discussion Meetings

**Topic: ENERGY in Wisconsin**

(See last three bulletins plus this bulletin)

**AFTERNOON UNIT, WEST, 1 p.m.**

St. Matthew's Church

1615 Wauwatosa Ave.

Contact: Minna Jones, 414/476-5249

#### EVENING UNITS

**EAST – 6:30p.m.**

Shorewood Public Library,

Community Rm. North

Contact: Judith Lindsay, 414/963-9829

Or Louise Petering, 414/351-3617

**WEST – 7:30p.m.**

Location Varies

Contact: Ruth Snedic, 414/771-7690

20 Mon.-7:15-9:00p.m.

Internat'l Relations Committee Mtg.

**Grt Decisions Topic: China & India**

Michael Daun's, 414/258-2745

2815 N. 67th St., Milwaukee

Contact: Marianne Steigerwald, 414/476-9272

20/21 Mon or Tues. TENTATIVE

**Issue Forum: Referendum on Iraq**

Location/time to be announced

Contact: Louise Petering, 414/351-3617

23 Thur.-9:00 & 11:00a.m.; 2:00p.m.

**New Voter/New Citizen Naturalization**

Federal Courthouse, 517 E. Wisconsin Ave.

(Courtroom unconfirmed)

Contact: Fran Swigart, 414/962-8984

23 Thur.-6:30-8:30p.m.

**Candidate Forum, Greendale School Board**

Greendale High, 6801 Southway St.,

High School Multi-Purpose Room,

Contact: Marilyn Boeldt, 414/444-2111

23 Thur.-7:00p.m.

**Candidate Forum, Brown Deer School Board**

Brown Deer Library, 5600 W. Bradley Rd.

Contact: Fran Swigart, 414/962-8984

27 Mon.-7:00-9:00p.m.

Natural Resource Committee Mtg.

**Topics: Energy, Great Lakes, Transportation**

Jennifer Runquist's home

3002 E. Kenwood Blvd., Milwaukee

Contact: Jennifer Runquist, 414/332-5067

#### April

4 SPRING ELECTION

!! VOTE!!

ELECTION NIGHT REPORTING

12 Wed.-6:00p.m.

**Board Meeting & Bulletin Deadline**

Washington Park Library

Contact: Karen Campbell, 414/774-5944

19 Wed. Unit Discussion Meetings

**Topic: Milwaukee Housing Trust Fund**

(Article Inside - Bring this bulletin)

**AFTERNOON UNIT, WEST, 1 p.m.**

St. Matthew's Church

1615 Wauwatosa Ave.

Presenter: Heather Dummer Combs,

Interfaith Council of Milwaukee

Contact: Minna Jones, 414/476-5249

#### EVENING UNITS

**EAST – 6:30p.m.**

Shorewood Public Lib., Community Rm. North

Presenter: Bethany Sanchez,

Metro-Milw. Fair Housing Council

Contact: Judith Lindsay, 414/963-9829

Or Louise Petering, 414/351-3617

**WEST – 7:30p.m.**

Location Varies

Presenter: Heather Dummer Combs,

Interfaith Council of Milwaukee

Contact: Ruth Snedic, 414/771-7690

24 Mon.-9:15a.m.

Internat'l Relations Committee Mtg.

**The Morality of Economic Growth**

Pauline Scribner's home, 414/256-6881

8220 Harwood Ave., #6068973 N. 70th St., Milw

Contact: Marianne Steigerwald, 414/476-9272

24 Mon.-7:00-9:00p.m.

Natural Resource Committee Mtg.

**Energy-Biofuels**

**Presenter: Analyst from the Dept. of Ag.,**

**Trade & Consumer Protection**

Jennifer Runquist's home

3002 E. Kenwood Blvd., Milwaukee

Contact: Jennifer Runquist, 414/332-5067

26 & 27 Wed. & Thur., 9:00 & 11:00a.m.; 2:00p.m.

**New Voter/New Citizen Naturalization**

Federal Courthouse, 517 E. Wisconsin Ave.

(Courtroom unconfirmed)

Contact: Fran Swigart (414) 962-8984

**SAVE THE DATE: Wed., May 17 – LWV Annual Meeting**

# ANNUAL MEETING

Barb Hussin, Director

Wednesday, May 17 is the date of this year's Annual Meeting at the Italian Community Center. Invitations will be mailed to all members and we encourage you to bring guests.

The evening will begin with a social at 5:30 p.m., followed by dinner. **Our speaker is Mr. Ed Huck, Executive Director of Wisconsin Alliance of Cities, and the topic is "Why TABOR/TPA is Bad for Wisconsin".**

The business meeting, which follows, includes the election of officers, budget adoption and local program priorities.

## STATE COUNCIL NATIONAL CONVENTION

Louise Petering, Director

Our League neighbor to the North, the Ozaukee County League, is hosting this year's **State Council** on May 20th. And we are fortunate to be able to participate in this event without having to pay for overnight accommodations! As is true for every League in the State, Milwaukee County is entitled to two delegates – and as many visitors as we want. I encourage YOU to take part in this year's council, "Sustainability: Working for the Future." Contact me at 414/351-3617 if you are interested.

The **LWVUS Convention** takes place in Minneapolis, MN from Saturday, June 10-Tuesday, the 13th at the Hilton Hotel. This will be the time for you to help set the path for League for the next two years. Program, budget, and the new LWVUS Board will be decided. As is true for State Council, the Milwaukee County League is entitled to two delegates and visitors. In the past, delegates and visitors have traded roles so more than two LWVUS members are able to participate. Workshops and informed, stimulating speakers are lined up. Garrison Keillor will be the banquet speaker and we'll hear a panel of jurists and scholars discuss "Understanding the System to Defend the Courts." I am getting excited and I hope you are too. Contact me at 414/351-3617 for more information and ways to coordinate our attendance at Convention!

## ACTION

Ruth Snedic

In a final push on the Concealed Weapons bill, we asked our members to call their legislators to uphold the Governor's veto on concealed weapons. The veto was upheld and won't be brought up again this session. We owe our thanks to two Democratic legislators who switched their vote and voted to uphold the veto, John Steinbrink and Terry Van Akkeren. Thank them for their votes.

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We asked our members to call or email their congressmen or women and protest any cuts in the budget for medicare, education, SSI, foster care, child care, child support and student loans. Alas, it passed anyhow so we still have a lot of work to do to keep vital services coming to those who need these funds. Congressman Sensenbrenner voted for the cuts.

We also asked that the Patriot Act keep the safeguards in it to assure our rights. It has been extended and will continue to be worked on to come up with compromises to satisfy those of us concerned about civil liberties. It could be passed by the time you read this.

I sent an Op-Ed article to the Journal Sentinel from Andrea Kaminski, our state League executive director, regarding voters' rights and the ID Bill. It was not published. I also sent a notice to The West Allis Star regarding the dates for viewing the League's Issues Briefings on Energy and Voter Rights on our local Channel 14. Thanks to Mary Shanahan for showing these informative programs and taping the Legislative Breakfast where she was said to be from MATA Community Media but she is really from the West Allis Community Media Center, WACMC!

## VOTE ON WILDLIFE & ENVIRONMENT

Barbara Eisenberg, Wildlife Biologist & NR committee member

Don't miss this chance! Every spring Wisconsin citizens have the opportunity to vote directly on propositions affecting wildlife and other environmental issues. This is your chance to speak out and show your support! What are YOU passionate about?

- Reducing air pollution?
- Ending the mourning dove hunt?
- Eliminating the use of cyanide in mining?
- Limiting the use of motorized recreational vehicles in some areas of our State Forests?
- Curbing the spread of invasive species that threatens native species diversity?

The DNR Spring Hearings are held in every county in Wisconsin, every year on the second Monday in April. Our state provides us with a unique opportunity to influence policies affecting Wisconsin's wildlife and the natural resources that both human and non-human animals depend upon. Wisconsin is the **ONLY** state in the country to allow citizens this opportunity. Don't miss this chance! Attendees at this meeting have the right to:

- Elect delegates to the Conservation Congress (Congress), a citizen committee that advises the State Natural Resources Board and DNR on resource management policy and environmental regulation concerning land, water, wildlife and fisheries stewardship,

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# SAVE THE DATE

**SAT., MARCH 25 – 9A.M. TO 2P.M.**  
**Carroll College**

## **WATER-WISE IN WAUKESHA COUNTY**

**Water Conservation for People and Communities:  
Techniques, technologies and trends.**

**Contact: <http://conservationvotersinstitute.org/waukesha/>  
OR: 414/453-3217**

## **CALL TO LWVUS CONVENTION**

**June 10-13**  
**Minneapolis, MN**

- Draft resolutions that affect the use of state parks, refuges, lakes and trails (the first step toward new legislation or rule changes), and
- Vote on issues such as lowering bag limits on fish, limiting the use of jet skis on smaller lakes and whether or not to expand the use of dogs for hunting.

Every county has a total of 5 delegates to the Congress that represent its citizens, 2 are elected every year for terms of 2 or 3 years. Participate in democracy - consider running for a delegate position yourself- candidates are usually unopposed.

The mission of the Conservation Congress is:

*“To represent the citizens of Wisconsin by working with the Natural Resources Board and the Department of Natural Resources to effectively manage Wisconsin’s greatest assets, our abundant natural resources, for present and future generations to enjoy.”*

Unfortunately, since most Wisconsinites are unaware that this vote takes place, the Natural Resources Board is receiving input from only a fraction of citizens who are concerned or affected by DNR policy and land management issues. Hikers, bikers, birdwatchers, cross-country skiers, canoeists and many other recreationists, especially women, have little or no representation in the Conservation Congress.

**So, what can you do to fix these problems?** Pick an issue that you feel strongly about and **draft a resolution**. Be sure to use the proper format. Then **attend your county meeting at 7p.m., Monday April 10**, (Milwaukee County residents will meet at Bay View High School auditorium, 2751 South Lenox Street; outside Milw. Co., contact your local DNR office for the location of your meeting) vote for your choice of delegates, and submit your resolution. If your resolution passes in your county and is approved by the appropriate Conservation Congress committee, the resolution goes for a statewide vote the following year. This year, two questions concern the baiting and feeding of deer.

You can learn about the issues ahead of time by picking up a booklet at your regional DNR office, viewing it online ([www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/nrboard/congress/springhearings/](http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/nrboard/congress/springhearings/)

and link to “question” and “rule changes”) or by contacting Ann Kutzke, Congress Assistant at (608)266-2952 or [Annmarie.Kutzke@dnr.state.wi.us](mailto:Annmarie.Kutzke@dnr.state.wi.us) to have one sent to you. If you have additional questions you can contact Al Phelan, Congress Liaison at (608) 266-0580.

## **LEAGUE ON COMMUNITY CABLE NETWORKS**

Tapes of the League Issues Briefings and the League/Wisconsin Women’s Network sponsored Legislative Breakfast will shown on the dates and times listed below during the month of March:

On **WACMC** - State Energy Policy  
Saturdays, 3pm, & Sundays, 6am

Changing World of Energy Regulation  
Tuesdays, 10pm, & Wednesdays, 11am

Voters’ Rights – Thursdays, 6pm, & Fridays, 10am

Legislative Breakfast-Thursdays, 8pm, & Fridays, noon

On **MATA** – See your local listings for the scheduling of the first three programs above.

## **YOUR ACTION NEEDED-TABOR**

"Taxpayers' Bill of Rights" (TPA)

Connie Threinen, Member, LWVWI Legislative Committee

*A government “of, by and for the people” means active engagement in on-going issues, including financing of government – the means by which civil societies manage themselves. Do read Connie’s synopsis below and contact your State Senator and Representative. League has been dubbed “partisan” and called “a wolf in sheep’s clothing” by Rep. Frank Lasee for pushing “aggressively” in opposing TPA, so your action as a citizen is needed to clearly communicate why TABOR/TPA sidesteps responsible representation and active citizenship.*

A new TABOR, "Taxpayers' Bill of Rights," will be introduced into the Legislature as soon as co-sponsors can be found. It is Senate Joint Resolution 63 (SJR63); its companion bill is Assembly Joint Resolution 77 (AJR 77). The

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new TABOR is longer than the previous version and has a new nick-name, the Taxpayer Protection Amendment (TPA). But, like TABOR, it would put into the Wisconsin Constitution a revenue freeze for every governing unit in the state that has revenues over \$1,000,000. There may be proponents who cheer, but opponents like the League of Women Voters bemoan having again to fight this disastrous piece of legislation.

Although proponents and opponents of TABOR/TPA disagree over its advantages and disadvantages, both agree that over time state and local spending would be significantly reduced. Reducing the size of government is an underlying goal of many TABOR/TPA champions. The League's view is quite different. Limiting taxes does have a general appeal, but cutting government services does not. Good government is a precious asset, and even if some elements occasionally fail, starving them is not likely to solve the problem. If an agency's permitting process is too slow, reducing the agency's budget is not a solution. The League believes that government services must be adequately funded.

The regulatory functions of government protect our environment and the health and safety of our communities. Public agencies provide safety nets for those in need. They provide and maintain the infrastructure of roads, highways, bridges, airports, docks, museums, and schools and colleges. Education, costly as it is, is a key not only for individual success but also for our nation's economic well-being. Reduce government? Punish it? How foolish. Make it more democratic, efficient and effective? Fine, the League is in support. However, we do not find that kind of fine-tuning in TABOR/TPA.

TABOR/TPA is not the usual Senate or Assembly bill that would create a law-a, statute: rather, it would amend the Wisconsin Constitution, and thereby avoid a possible gubernatorial veto and be more difficult to overturn than a statute. It is interesting that the authors have included in SJR 63 a provision that would allow an amendment to the "freeze" amendment to be amended by just one vote of the Legislature plus a referendum, making it easier to amend the amendment than to pass it in the first place. Neither the reason for this provision nor its implications are fully known.

The 12 pages of SJR 63 contain details so complicated that its meanings puzzle even the experts. Its rigid restrictions would surely restrict municipal boards and councils as they make the decisions they were elected to make. In the case of a natural disaster or a major accident,

these entities could be unable to raise needed revenue. Much as some legislators would like to gain the support of their constituencies by their campaigns to lower taxes, the truth is

that local, elected officials watch their budgets closely and judges the needs of their constituents carefully lest they be voted out of office.

Touted frequently as a way to reduce local property taxes, this amendment could also have the opposite effect. "Freezing" the revenues of the State itself would probably reduce the state aids and shared taxes that give relief to local budgets. Without such financial assistance from the state, local units might feel pressured to fill the revenue gap through their local property tax. A paradox indeed.

TABOR/TPA would have significant effects on the whole economy. Government services undergird the economy, building and maintaining the infrastructure, regulating commerce and manufacturing, and protecting health and safety. The benefit of providing employment and income for individuals must also be recognized. TABOR analysts have noted that freezing government spending when revenues are rising might not affect budgets severely. In failing economies, however, TABOR-like restrictions force continual declines. Wisconsin's economy is hardly ebullient and the future is worrisome.

The League will continue our opposition to any tax freeze proposals, especially any sought through Constitutional amendment. We will continue to advocate for equitable taxation and responsible funding of governmental services.

## **MARCH UNIT MEETINGS, ENERGY**

Louise Petering, Natural Resources Committee

At the March Unit Meetings we will once again be discussing a topic which no doubt affects us whether through increased charges on utility bills, siting of power plants, or concerns about health and pollution. We will focus on the **governance of energy. Documents 2 and 3 below and the Nov/Dec and Jan/Feb League Lines "Energy" articles provide background information for our discussions.** You may access documents 2 and 3 on the LWV WI website, [www.lwvwi.org](http://www.lwvwi.org). About half way down on the lefts side of the home page find "energy study" and click to find "Wisconsin Energy Basics."

**Questions for you to consider are:** How has governance of energy changed from 1983 to the present? Have those changes affected citizen participation in energy issues? How strong is the energy priorities law of 1993? What are the opportunities for League relative to changes in governance of energy? Does our concern for energy at all relate to the TABOR/TPA issue?

Update on the State Study: The State League Energy Study Committee has produced and distributed its first five papers

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in the LWV-WI series, “**Wisconsin Energy Basics**” as well as its two Appendices, “Useful Websites” and “Glossary of Energy Terms.” These items present brief, factual information to help Leagues and their members as the energy study proceeds. The papers are: 1) “**The League and Energy**,” a retrospective of the national and Wisconsin Leagues’ energy-related activities; 2) “**Governing Energy Legislation**,” a summary of Wisconsin legislation from 1983 to the present; 3) “**Overview of Regulatory and Administrative Agencies**,” a description of national, regional and state agencies that define and circumscribe decision-making powers; 4) “**Energy Statistics** from *Wisconsin Energy Statistics*, 2005, Department of Administration,” information on Wisconsin’s energy use patterns and systems; and 5) “Executive Summary of *Wisconsin’s Strategic Energy Assessment, Energy 2010*”

## NATURAL RESOURCES

### ENERGY - NOTES ON “WISCONSIN’S ENERGY POLICY IS ON THE RIGHT TRACK

Louise Petering, NR Committee Member

In prefacing his remarks at the Nov. 19 general meeting, Mr. Ebert stated it is difficult yet important to find the right balance between economic and environmental interests when addressing the energy issue. To do so, an aggressive dialogue on energy is needed in WI and the US. In Wisconsin we are in a pretty comfortable position despite our under-investment in our energy infrastructure.

**About the PSC** - In 1907 WI established the Public Service Commission (PSC) as an independent agency. We were one of the first states to establish a regulatory tradition, beginning with regulation of railroads. Currently the PSC regulates 1100 public utilities involved in telecommunications, electricity, water and gas. Its 3 commissioners are appointed by the governor and approved by the senate. About 180 people are employed by the PSC. Its decision-making processes are transparent and involve public input. Case records and facts are published on its website, <http://psc.wi.gov>.

### Where We Are Regarding Major Generation in Wisconsin

About 170 sites in Wisconsin generate electric power. Several types of fuel are used to generate this power: 60% coal (this is decreasing), 17.9% nuclear, 2.9% natural gas (this is increasing due to a 1997 decision when gas was cheaper and because natural gas power plants are smaller and easier to build than coal-fired plants), 15% imported/day maximum, 0.4% renewable, 3.1% hydro and 0.1% oil. Coal fired plants and nuclear plants currently provide cheap energy with both having environmental impacts, the former to air and water quality, the latter in terms of transportation, storage and security of high level radioactive wastes. Yucca Mountain, the national, high-level radioactive waste disposal site still in question will not

contain wastes generated to date. So more sites are needed for wastes already generated as well as those to be generated even if no nuclear plants are built.

Energy use increased by about 2.5% each year in the last 25 years. Assuming this rate of increase continues and demand will be satisfied, WI will have to build new power plants and transmission lines, conserve, and turn to other fuel sources, perhaps liquefied natural gas.

**Where We’ve Been in Wisconsin** – In 1997 & 1998 we were at a low point in Wisconsin regarding energy sufficiency. Use was growing from 2-3% a year due to increased numbers of appliances in homes, growth in the economy, and hot summers. Because electrical generating capacity in IL had been greater than local demand, WI was able to import electricity from IL. With an increased IL demand, we now need new generating and transmission facilities and conservation. In response to this low in our energy sufficiency, the State decided to invest in 4000 megawatts of new facilities, mostly gas. Thus, building projects ended a 25-year hiatus in construction of generating facilities and a 30-year hiatus in transmission facilities.

Energy in WI is now part of a national market, not a state market as once was the case. Power availability in WI is affected to a great extent by the national and regional market place. We are part of a regional wholesale market for electricity, and electrical generation companies are no longer the owners of transmission lines. New regulations have separated generation from transmission. In addition the availability of liquefied natural gas (LNG) is diminished by the unwillingness of seaports to become on land transfer sites of LNG because of safety issues.

Energy policy in the State has not fallen along party lines. Governor Doyle and the legislature cooperate with respect to siting legislation for generation and transmission facilities, financing, and the permitting process. Review of proposals for facilities is now done in parallel by the DNR (which oversees environmental concerns) and the PSC (oversees economics, reliability and customer concerns), not in sequence as was the case earlier.

**The Current Picture in WI** – In Southeast Wisconsin, the Port Washington plant was switched from a coal plant to two natural gas plants. Oak Creek was recently approved to retrofit for coal. WE Energies appealed its first rate case in 5 years. And the State is exploring a pilot energy program for low-income folks. The “Conserve Wisconsin Initiative” (CWI) hopes to protect water and land, achieve a sustainable energy future with renewables and conservation. The CWI consists of 25 member stakeholders and recommends a 10% renewable energy supply from the current 0.4% by 2012.

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Whereas previous energy planning was based on a 3yr snapshot, Wisconsin currently makes energy decisions based on the Strategic Energy Assessment (SEA) that looks ahead 7-8 years to assess future energy demand. (See pp. 3 & 4 of your November bulletin for an overview of the SEA.) Utilities provide information to the PSC, and the PSC asks policy-related questions to make sure an adequate energy supply is available at least cost with least community impact and least environmental impact.

Regionally, WI is involved in MISO, a regional transmission group that arranges day-ahead wholesale market sales. Before 2001, the 5 utilities and the cooperatives, and municipal generators each generated and transmitted to their own service areas. Now because of the integrated system the energy picture is more complicated.

A couple of facts learned in the Q & A period.

- 1) The PSC is barred by law from considering the costs of negative health effects in its decision-making.
- 2) WI cannot meet the needs of a 2-3% increase in energy use by conservation alone. Public attitudes/perceptions need to be changed, i.e., the public could use many more energy conservative light bulbs.

Please Note: All questions submitted at the Nov. meeting have been sent to the PSC. Their answers to those will appear on our League website, [www.milwaukee-voters.org](http://www.milwaukee-voters.org)

## ENERGY – BIOFUELS

### Natural Resource Committee Meeting

Jennifer Ruquist, Chair

On Monday, April 24th our committee will hear about Wisconsin's Alternative Fuel Policy from a Dept. of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection analyst. The speaker will focus on biodiesel, ethanol, Wisconsin projects relating to alternative fuels, positives, negatives, and policies. Join us for this political and personally relevant topic. Contact me at 332-5067 if you plan to come.

## ELECTION NIGHT REPORTING

Thanks to Barbara Hoppe who phoned to recruit reporters for the Feb 21 election. And thanks to League members and friends who did the reporting. Barb and I reworked and updated past lists of reporters so she is ready to recruit for April 4th election. If you have never done election night reporting and would like to get an inside look at the process of vote gathering and reporting, phone Barb at 355-5872.

## ELECTION ACTIVITIES

### Candidate Forums, Helpers Needed

Louise Petering, Director

In March the League and Greendale Chamber of Commerce will be cosponsoring two Candidate Forums, one for Village Board, one for School Board. Marilyn Boeldt will be moderating with help from Ruth Snedic. Fran Swigart is moderating a Brown Deer School Board Candidate Forum with help from Helga Guequierre and our cosponsor, the Brown Deer Jr. Women's Club. Fran will also moderate a Brown Deer City Aldermanic Race cosponsored by the North Shore Kiwanis. Thanks, Fran, Marilyn, Helga and Ruth.

With three remaining elections in 2006 (April 4, Sept. 12 and Nov.7), we are in the swing of Candidate Forums. **If you are willing to help with these forums now or in the fall, please email us at [info@milwaukee-voters.org](mailto:info@milwaukee-voters.org) or phone 414/273-8683. The more volunteers we have, the merrier we'll all be!**

## APRIL UNIT DISCUSSION MEETINGS MILWAUKEE HOUSING TRUST FUND

Sue Lindberg, Director and HTFC Liaison

At the January board meeting participation in the Housing Trust Fund Coalition (HTFC) was approved. This is a coalition of churches and community organizations supporting the establishment of a public fund to promote and preserve affordable housing. The League's national position on housing states: "Responsibility in the nationwide effort to achieve equality of opportunity for access to housing resides with government at all levels and with the private sector...."

Included below is background information on a proposed Housing Trust Fund for Milwaukee. To more fully assist members in participating in this important local issue, EACH unit meeting in April will have a speaker from the Housing Coalition who will discuss the goals and needs of the Trust Fund. We especially urge members who reside in the city of Milwaukee to attend and to invite friends and members of other groups to learn more about this local effort and how it can be supported.

### About A Housing Trust Fund in Milwaukee

**What is it?** A distinct public fund established by the city of Milwaukee to be a depository for dedicated public revenue, which could be regularly spent. This permanent ongoing source of revenue would financially support production and preservation of local affordable housing.

- Nationally, 350 Housing Trust Funds exist in cities, counties and states.
- A broad coalition has been formed to establish a Housing Trust Fund in Milwaukee.

### How the Housing Trust Fund would work

- The City of Milwaukee will administer the fund.
- Funds will be collected and used every year.
- An advisory board appointed by the Common Council will make decisions on the distribution of funds, program requirements, eligible applicants and eligible uses.
- Nonprofit, for-profit, government agencies and developers can apply for funds.

### What the Housing Trust Fund would support

New construction and rehabilitation of housing, and support services directly related to housing for (income based on a family of four):

- Low-income renters and homeless persons with an annual income below \$33,600
- Moderate-income homeowners with an annual income below \$53,760

### Housing needs in Milwaukee

- HUD estimates that Milwaukee needs 28,000 additional units of affordable housing.
- Milwaukee has the 7th highest poverty rate in the nation with 143,000 residents (26%) living below poverty in 2004.
- One in five (20%) Milwaukee renters spend more than 50% of their income on rent.
- Approximately 2,000 individuals in Milwaukee are homeless on any given night.
- Federal block grants to support affordable housing projects are expected to be cut by \$1.3 million in 2006—a 21.6% decrease in funding since 2001.6

### Business benefits of the Housing Trust Fund

National Association of Home Builders estimates that every 100 units of single and multi-family housing will generate, on an on-going annual basis:

- 45-65 jobs
- \$2.2-2.8 million in income to local businesses
- \$384,000-409,000 in local tax revenue

## INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Marianne Steigerwald, Chair

As our committee discusses the Great Decisions series of issues, it is important to keep a generative mindset. With that in mind, I share the following perspective, *Why I Am Optimistic About the Future* by **Carol Edler Baumann**, founder and former director of the Institute of World Affairs at UW-Milwaukee.

I am a 73-year-old retired Professor of International Relations; in those 73 years I have witnessed the bloodshed and horror of international warfare and national revolutions, the despair of poverty, starvation, illness and death, the fear of international terrorism, and the devastation of tsunamis, hurricanes and tornadoes. But I have also witnessed the strength and perseverance of the human spirit and the love of humanity, which have always ultimately prevailed over that horror, despair, fear and devastation.

The pessimists would have us believe that the human spirit is a frail and fragile plant, easily trampled by man's inhumanity to man. Calling history to their aid, they could point to the past century alone for examples: the carnage of two world wars and regional conflicts in every continent on earth, the bloodshed of revolutions and insurrections, the unequal distribution and sharing of resource, the hatreds which have spawned terrorism, and the inability or unwillingness to organize a global response to natural disasters.

Yet there are other, more hopeful examples which bear evidence to the contention that tomorrow may indeed be a better day. World War II was followed by the Marshall Plan of assistance to and reconstruction of Western Europe and by the creation of a global system designed to promote peaceful development and to prevent future wars—the United Nations. The specter of nuclear warfare was held at bay while the Cold War played itself out without becoming a hot one. Regional conflicts were contained, if not solved, without spreading to global proportions. And in the wake of hurricanes and tornadoes, tsunamis and floods, assistance did finally come; if not in an organized global way, it nonetheless came – in time and money, in food and clothing—from individuals, NGOs, national governments, and international organizations alike.

So history provides us with examples for the future which project both fear and hope— a fear that the inhumanity of man to man might once again dim the prospects of hope versus a hope that the enlightened human spirit will conquer the negativity of fear. The pessimists would opt for fear; the optimists for hope. And that hope is based not only on the more positive examples which history provides, but also on foreseeable trends for the future. The potential benefits of globalization heavily outweigh the potential pitfalls: the spread of new technologies for industrial production and agricultural growth, the amazing breakthroughs in modern science and medicine and their impact on human lives, knowledge and health, the development of global transportation and trading systems, and instant communications between individuals, groups, corporations and countries.

All of these trends, I believe, are portents of a future in which the human spirit and the love of humanity will flourish, and the positive aspirations of hope will conquer the negative doubts of fear.

## Join the League Today!

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THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS  
OF MILWAUKEE COUNTY

P.O. Box 100785  
Milwaukee, WI 53210  
414-273-8683  
[www.Milwaukee-voters.org](http://www.Milwaukee-voters.org)

**SAVE THE DATE**  
**Annual Meeting!**  
May 17, 5:30 p.m.



