

Unit Questions for “Bridging the Polarization Divide” General Meeting

At the April 29, 2017 General Meeting on Bridging the Polarization Divide, co-sponsored by the LWVMC, the Whitefish Bay Public Library and Wisconsin Public Radio, you heard about the political divide that exists, some possible reasons for it and ways to overcome that divide in conversation. Kathleen Dunn of *Wisconsin Public Radio* and Erin Richards of the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* moderated the discussion by a panel of five professionals who have either researched the divide or experienced it directly in their work.

During the meeting you heard responses from an editorial page editor, two politicians from each of the major political parties and two political scientists. In addition, you learned about and perhaps discussed and practiced skills one can use to bridge this divide in conversations.

The following are suggested questions for the Unit meetings following the April 29, 2017 General Meeting on Bridging the Polarization Divide:

1. How would you characterize the political polarization that exists?
2. Was any experimental evidence provided regarding causes of the polarization divide? The role if any of media? Political parties? The economy?
3. Have any of your beliefs about those who hold different political views or their reasons for holding those views changed as a result of the general meeting?
4. Which, if any of the strategies for conducting conversations across the polarization divide resonated with you?
5. Did the small group discussion provide you with new insights about talking with someone on the other side of the polarization divide?

The “Reaching across the Divide” handbook by Essential Partners that presents ways to conduct such conversations can be downloaded from:
<http://www.whatisessential.org/red-blue> .

Resources for further study of this topic can be found in the January/Feb *Voter*; other resources will be posted at lwvmilwaukee.org.

We hope you join us for a lively discussion!