



**Presidents' Message**

March and April will be active and lively times for the Milwaukee League. Working with partners, we have two general meetings that will be of interest to you and our community. Do you have questions about who voted and who didn't vote in 2016? And why? The March 18 general meeting, "Engaging the Electorate," should help us examine concerns.

We came through what may be the most polarizing and contentious election in recent U.S. history. Some observers note that the political rancor and rhetoric reached all-time highs, injecting unprecedented fear, division, and unease into our culture. How does one remain calm and centered? Learn how to walk through this divisive political climate by attending the April 29 general meeting, "Bridging the Polarization Divide."

For many members, a favorite League activity is witnessing naturalization ceremonies at the Federal Courthouse, followed by promptly registering the new citizens to vote. Mary Kae had that honor on Thursday, February 23. To see how proud and excited new citizens are to participate in the U.S government, the hard work required to *Make Democracy Work for All* is worthwhile. Watching the federal judge administer the Oath of Allegiance always brings tears to the eyes.

Now is the *Time for Action!* The media has been filled the past months with news of marches, protests, and rallies in cities across America. It is one of our basic rights. Whether in favor or against a government initiative, people believe their actions should count. We hope legislators and members of Congress will listen. There is a groundswell of interest in government with hope for changing or maintaining policies.

In the League, we rely on more than just hope -- we have a mission of **Action**. If we have facts, we can work and act intelligently. Be alert, read, and listen to a variety of news sources. Attend (in person or online) council meetings, legislative hearings, and community gatherings. Correspond with your elected officials by email, phone, or an actual pen and paper letter.

Check out our website, [lwvmilwaukee.org](http://lwvmilwaukee.org), and the state and national League websites. Be part of a larger effort to lobby and advocate for specific LWV positions. Respond to *Action Alerts*. The League promises to be vigilant, to hold government open and accountable. We'll always advocate for voting rights and provide voting resources to the disenfranchised. We often say that democracy has never been a spectator sport. The League will continue to champion our causes and will advocate for our positions.

To quote Ruth Clusen, former LWV-US President and Green Bay resident, "*We are the organization that can make the difference. Our pragmatic techniques, our proven tenacity in action and goals, our reputation for integrity in clarifying issues are all great assets.*"





**Ruth and Mary Kae**




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# CALENDAR

March 2017			
8	Wed	6 pm	<b>Board Meeting</b> 1845 N. Farwell Ave., Milwaukee Contact: Mary Kae Nelson, 414-964-9988; Ruth Shank, 414-763-2471
9	Thurs	9 am	<b>Naturalization Ceremony / New Voter Registration</b> MATC Cooley Auditorium, 1015 N. 6th St., Milwaukee Contact: Mary Jo McDonald, 414-962-8195
9	Thurs	10:00 - 11:30 am	<b>International Relations/Great Decisions Discussion Group - Trade and Politics</b> Wauwatosa Public Library, Firefly Room, 7635 W. North Ave., Wauwatosa Contact: Ned Maxwell, 414-258-9222
15	Wed		<b>Last Day to Register to Vote by Mail</b>
18	Sat	10 am	<b>General Meeting: Engaging the Electorate</b> Wauwatosa Public Library, Firefly Room, 7635 W. North Ave., Wauwatosa Contact: Kathy Johnson, 414-443-0931
20	Mon		<b>First Day for In-Person Absentee Voting (City Hall)</b>
20	Mon	12 noon	<b>Lunch &amp; Learn: Supporting and Funding Our Public Schools</b> Sojourner Family Peace Center, 619 W. Walnut St., Milwaukee Contact: Mary Kae Nelson, 414-964-9988
20	Mon	1 pm	<b>Membership Committee Meeting</b> Sojourner Family Peace Center, 619 W. Walnut St., Milwaukee Contact: Shirley Halloran, 414-964-1355
22	Wed	7 pm	<b>Natural Resources Committee Meeting</b> Conference Call Contact: Carol Diggelman, 414-232-3739
23	Thurs	9 am 11 am 2 pm	<b>Naturalization Ceremony / New Voter Registration</b> Federal Courthouse, 517 E. Wisconsin Ave., Courtroom 390 Contact: Mary Jo McDonald, 414-962-8195
30	Thurs		<b>Last Day to Request Absentee Ballots by Mail</b>
31	Fri		<b>Last Day for In-Person Absentee Voting (City Clerk's Office)</b>

April 2017			
4	Tues		<b>Spring Election - VOTE!</b>
6	Thurs	9 am 11 am	<b>Naturalization Ceremony / New Voter Registration</b> Federal Courthouse, 517 E. Wisconsin Ave., Courtroom 320 Contact: Mary Jo McDonald, 414-962-8195
12	Wed	6 pm	<b>Board Meeting</b> 1845 N. Farwell Ave., Milwaukee Contact: Mary Kae Nelson, 414-964-9988; Ruth Shank, 414-763-2471
13	Thurs	10:00 am	<b>International Relations/Great Decisions Discussion Group - South China Sea</b> Wauwatosa Public Library, Firefly Room, 7635 W. North Ave., Wauwatosa Contact: Ned Maxwell, 414-258-9222

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<b>April 2017 (Cont.)</b>			
<b>17</b>	<b>Mon</b>	<b>12 noon</b>	<b>Lunch &amp; Learn: Juvenile Justice - Milwaukee Youth and Lincoln Hills and Copper Lake</b> Sojourner Family Peace Center, 619 W. Walnut St., Milwaukee Contact: Mary Kae Nelson, 414-964-9988
<b>17</b>	<b>Mon</b>	<b>1 pm</b>	<b>Membership Committee Meeting</b> Sojourner Family Peace Center, 619 W. Walnut St., Milwaukee Contact: Barbara Rasmussen, 414-963-9535
<b>20</b>	<b>Thurs</b>	<b>9 am 11 am 2 pm</b>	<b>Naturalization Ceremony / New Voter Registration</b> Federal Courthouse, 517 E. Wisconsin Ave., Courtroom 390 Contact: Mary Jo McDonald, 414-962-8195
<b>26</b>	<b>Wed</b>	<b>6 pm</b>	<b>Natural Resources Committee Meeting</b> Shorewood Village Center Conference Room, 3920 N. Murray Ave., Shorewood Contact: Carol Diggelman, 414-232-3739
<b>29</b>	<b>Sat</b>	<b>10 am</b>	<b>General Meeting: Bridging the Polarization Divide</b> Whitefish Bay Public Library, 5420 N. Marlborough Drive, Whitefish Bay Contact: Ann Batiza, 414-238-3903

## **An Exciting Program Making Meeting**

**Kathy Johnson, Vice President for Program**

The annual Program Making Meeting was held on Wednesday, January 18. About 20 members took advantage of this opportunity to participate in the grassroots work of the League. Initial discussion centered on clarification of the meeting's role in League work and how League positions relate to action measures. Explanation of who may speak for the League was reviewed: for LWV-MC, these are Co-Presidents Mary Kae Nelson and T. Ruth Shank or thier designee.

Participants asked questions related to League positions and offered suggestions for change in positions. Results of that discussion include the following:

- Due to recent developments, information and/or further education about the League's position on redistricting was requested. Ideas to address this need include an article in *The Voter* and "Popcorn Nights" where a video about redistricting can be shown and discussed.
- Several issues will be brought to the attention of LWV-WI requesting attentive monitoring for developments. These include the role of dark money in Wisconsin politics and status of calls for a Constitutional Convention.
- Barb Hussin requested eliminating the LWV-MC position on education and Chapter 220. After reviewing the position, it was recommended that the language regarding Chapter 220 be deleted and the rest of the position remain, as it is still appropriate. Sarajane Kennedy will revise the position accordingly.

There was significant discussion around questions from LWV-WI regarding the possible need for a study about poverty. We were asked to review current state and national positions to determine their adequacy in addressing poverty issues. Lively discussion led to the following conclusions:

- Current state and national positions are adequate for advocacy in general.
- No need for a study on poverty was identified.
- Participants identified a need to examine the issue of poverty and current positions with a global view, rather than in a disparate manner.
- Institutional poverty should be addressed, i.e., how policies and programs from government and other institutions contribute to poverty.

Two exciting developments came from suggestions at the meeting:

1. Barbara Boles proposed developing a book club to read and discuss works that address social policy issues. Barbara suggested beginning with Matthew Desmond's book, *Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City*.
2. Sarajane Kennedy indicated the need for creating a social policy committee to address social policy issues.

As we are in the early stages of planning, see the May/June *Voter* for more information. To indicate that you'd like to be involved in these planning stages, contact Kathy Johnson at [vpprogram@lwvmilwaukee.org](mailto:vpprogram@lwvmilwaukee.org).

## March General Meeting: Engaging the Electorate, or Why Should We Care About the Political Process?

Kathy Johnson, Vice President for Program

Charles Franklin, nationally recognized government scholar and pollster who is director of the Marquette University Law School Poll, will speak at the March general meeting. It will be held on Saturday, March 18, at the Wauwatosa Public Library's Firefly Room at 10 a.m.

The goals of the meeting are to learn about who votes in Milwaukee County, to reflect on political engagement, and further, to determine what we as an organization and as individuals can do to increase participation in the political process.

Recent reports indicate increased interest in organizations such as the League of Women Voters. Between September and December of 2016, LWV-MC gained 30 new members, and the growth continues into 2017.

Because we hope to draw participants from the general public as well as from League membership, information about various Milwaukee organizations also working toward increased political engagement will be available.

Wauwatosa Public Library is at North Avenue and 76th Street (Wauwatosa Avenue). Library entrance and a large parking lot are south of the building.

## Bridging the Polarization Divide, Saturday, April 29

Ann Batiza, Board Director

The public is invited to the April general meeting, "**Bridging the Polarization Divide**" co-sponsored League of Women Voters of Milwaukee County and Whitefish Bay Library.

This meeting will be held at the **Whitefish Bay Library**, on **Saturday, April 29, 2017** at 5420 N. Marlborough Drive. Participants will gather at 10 am for refreshments and the public meeting will run from 10:15 - noon. The public is invited to an optional brown bag lunch for small group discussions that will last until 1:15.

Wisconsin Public Radio host and League member [Kathleen Dunn](#), and *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* reporter Erin Richards, will co-moderate a discussion whose panelists will include, among others:

- [David D. Haynes](#) - editorial page editor of the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*
- [Dale Schultz](#) - retired Republican member of the Wisconsin Senate
- [Tim Cullen](#) - retired Democratic member of the Wisconsin Senate

From 10:15 - noon, the program will start with a short presentation of ways in which we are currently politically polarized, presented by science writer and League member, Mary Sussman. This introduction will be followed by a moderated panel discussion (described above) of some of the causes for our current polarization. Milwaukee filmmaker and League member [Janet Fitch](#), will then present skills to help bridge that gap during polarized conversations.

From noon - 1:15, participants will put those skills into practice during small group, brown bag discussions. The bridging skills taught will focus on trying to understand the other's point of view rather than a desire to change it. As Abraham Lincoln said, "Do I not destroy my enemies when I make them my friends?"

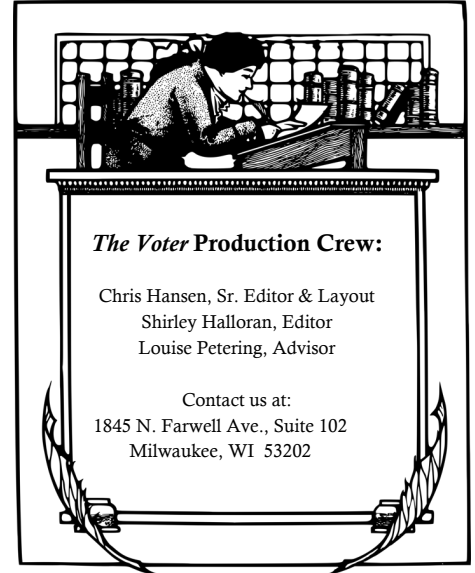
If you have any questions, please call the League office at 414-273-8683 and someone will get back to you. There is no charge, but you will need to bring your lunch for the small group discussions.



## LWV-MC Annual Meeting

Wednesday, May 17  
5:15 - 9 p.m.

Wisconsin Club  
(Watch for more information)

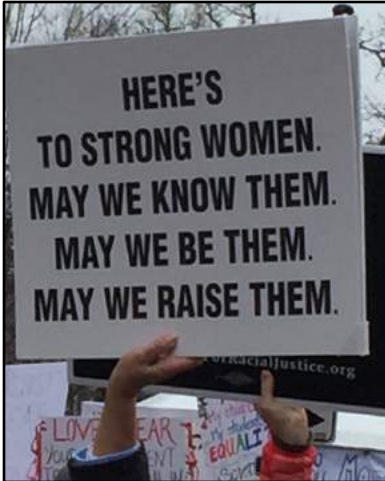




# Women's March on Madison

Hulyn Farr

Madison was cold and gloomy on Saturday, January 21, but it was warm, bright, and energizing to Michele Goldstein, me, and 75,000 of our new friends! It was predicted that the Women's March that day would draw 20,000, but far more Wisconsin women, men, and children showed support for women's issues in Wisconsin and the nation. Some marchers carried posters, some wore the well-known pink caps.



LWV-WI had a strong presence -- we joined five Leaguers from Appleton and a dozen from the Dane County League and the League's state office.

The plan was to gather on the Library Mall at UW-Madison, then travel up State Street to the Capitol. Well, there was no traveling because State Street was totally packed with marchers, and no one could move. After an hour of not moving, many of us took to the side streets and made our way to Capitol Square. Though it was difficult to hear speakers, who included Madison's Congressional Representative Mark Pocan and Milwaukee's State Senator Lena Taylor, demonstrators' signs spoke loud and clear.



## Two Exciting Developments

**Kathy Johnson, Vice President for Program**

LWV-MC is in the process of implementing two suggestions from the January Program Making Meeting: 1) putting a social policy committee into place, and 2) developing a book club centered on works that address social policy issues. We are in the early stages of development, and there will be more information in the May/June *Voter*.

To participate in the planning stages, contact Kathy Johnson at [vpprogram@lwvmilwaukee.org](mailto:vpprogram@lwvmilwaukee.org).



## New Members

**Shirley Halloran, Membership Committee**

- Linda Andrews, New Berlin
- Serena Clardie, Milwaukee
- Carole Dede, Milwaukee
- Carla DuPont, Hales Corners
- Sharon Goelz, Menomonee Falls
- Eloisa Gomez, Milwaukee
- Tracy Harrington, Milwaukee
- Amy Heart, Milwaukee
- Katherine Kain, Milwaukee
- Ilene and Jack Leff, Bayside
- Judith Leiterman, Milwaukee
- Pat Leone-Thiel, Colgate
- Mia Lewerer, Milwaukee
- Erin McCarthy, Milwaukee
- Stephanie Miller, Brown Deer
- Diana Otterbacher Brown Deer
- Sherry Payne, Milwaukee
- Jennifer Quirk, Menomonee Falls
- Davey Singer, Glendale
- Thomas Treder, Milwaukee

Recent reports of increased interest in organizations such as the League of Women Voters are borne out. From September to December of 2016, we welcomed 30 new members. As you can see, the trend continues into early 2017. May you be encouraged to know that it's possible to engage with like-minded people.

### In Sympathy

We extend our League's sympathy to members Kathy Slamka and daughter Alexis Gassenhuber whose dear sister and aunt, Terra, was struck and killed by a vehicle in January as she crossed a Florida street. Terra broke ground as a We Energies plant supervisor and gave generously to the blood bank, 28 gallons total, during her life.

## On Membership

**Chris Weber Spornick, Membership Co-Chair**

Winter scenes in urban Milwaukee County are not pretty this time of year. Trees are bare, snow is dirty, cars are smoke-colored from salt, birds are few except for squawking crows. Folks are already tired of cloudy days, temps that fluctuate from teens to 40s, too short daylight (when *does* daylight saving time begin?), wearing heavy clothes, etc.

But over many years, I have blasted the winter blues by being busy with League. I have been energized by teaming with League members and other civic activists to inform and engage our communities on issues that affect people at home and in their wider world. Leaguers encourage citizens to value and use civic power. With earnest and polite communiques, we can tell the pleasure of membership so as to retain and increase our numbers.

Efforts by all of us can *Make Democracy Happen*.

## Voter Services Celebrates

**Mary Jo McDonald**

Spring 2017 brings the exciting news that two grants have been awarded for LWV-MC voter services activities from the LWV-US Education Fund.

The High School Education project received its third \$1,000 grant to increase voter education and voter registration, especially in MPS schools. Four teams are actively working to instill in young people the importance of voting throughout their lifetimes.



At the Federal Courthouse, League volunteer registrants will use \$3,000 for technology upgrades. Newly naturalized citizens can be promptly registered using devices linked to the Wisconsin online voter registration system. Since technology is portable, it can be used anywhere.

Many of you know that applying for these grants involves effort. Thanks for Liz Aelion, Peggy Creer, Michele Goldstein, Dannette Lank, Mary Jo McDonald, and Leigh Ann Tidey for their contributions of time and energy.

# It May be Time to Review League Positions on Constitutional Amendment and a Constitutional Convention

Kathy Johnson, Vice President for Program

Support for calling for a Constitutional Convention has been reported again recently. LWV-US established positions on both Constitutional Amendment and a Constitutional Convention in 2016.

## *Statement of Position on Constitutional Conventions under Article V of the U.S. Constitution as Announced by National Board, January 2016*

The League of Women Voters is concerned that there are many unresolved questions about the powers and processes of an Article V Constitutional Convention. The League believes that such a convention should be called only if the following conditions are in place:

- The Constitutional Convention must be transparent and not conducted in secret. The public has a right to know what is being debated and voted on.
- Representation at the Constitutional Convention must be based on population rather than one state, one vote, and delegates should be elected rather than appointed. The delegates represent citizens, should be elected by them, and must be distributed by U.S. population.
- Voting at the Constitutional Convention must be by delegate, not by state. Delegates from one state can have varying views and should be able to express them by individual votes.
- The Constitutional Convention must be limited to a specific topic. It is important to guard against a “runaway convention” which considers multiple issues or topics that were not initiated by the states.
- Only state resolutions on a single topic count when determining if a Constitutional Convention should be called. Counting state requests by topic ensures that there is sufficient interest in a particular subject to call a Convention; this enhances citizen interest and participation in the process.
- The validity of state calls for an Article V Constitutional Convention must be determined by the most recent action of the state. If a state has enacted a rescission of its call, that rescission must be respected by Congress.

## *Statement of Position on Evaluating Constitutional Amendment Proposals, as Announced by National Board, January 2016*

The League of Women Voters will only support a proposed amendment to the U.S. Constitution if it advances and conforms to a LWV-US position. In addition, the League believes the following should be considered in identifying an appropriate and well-crafted constitutional amendment:

- Whether the public policy objective addresses matters of such acute and abiding importance that the fundamental charter of our nation must be changed. Amendments are changes to a document that provides stability to our system and should be undertaken to address extreme problems or long-term needs.
- Whether the amendment as written would be effective in achieving its policy objective. Amendments that may be unenforceable, miss the objective, or have unintended consequences may not achieve the policy objective.
- Whether the amendment would either make our political system more democratic or protect individual rights. Most adopted amendments have sought to make our system more representative or to protect the rights of minorities.
- Whether the public policy objective can be achieved by a legislative or political approach that is less difficult than a constitutional amendment. To expend resources wisely, it is important to consider whether legislation or political action is more likely to succeed than an amendment.
- Whether the public policy objective is more suited to a constitutional and general approach than to a statutory and detailed approach. It is important to consider whether the goal can best be achieved by an overall value statement, which will be interpreted by the courts, or with specific statutory detail to resolve important issues and reduce ambiguity.

More information is available at [lww.org](http://lww.org).

### **ANNOUNCEMENT** Louise Petering, LWV-WI Director

The annual meeting of the League of Women Voters-Wisconsin will be held in Green Bay on Friday and Saturday, June 9 and 10. Details will follow in the May/June *Voter*.





**Join Up! Join In! Join the League of Women Voters - Today!**

**Non-partisan, non-profit since 1920!**

Where hands-on work to safeguard democracy leads to civic improvement and leaders are actively engaged in effecting change at the local, state, and national levels.

Website: [lwvmilwaukee.org](http://lwvmilwaukee.org)

Email Address: [league@lwvmilwaukee.org](mailto:league@lwvmilwaukee.org)

**Milwaukee County Dues** (circle one):

\$70 Individual                      \$110 Household                      \$ 25 Student

\$100 Sustaining (supports \$25 memberships)                      \$170 Centennial (supports action & activities)

Financial support available upon request -- call 414-964-9988

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Home Phone (\_\_\_\_)\_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Work/Cell Phone (\_\_\_\_)\_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ WI Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

**Interests:** Voter Service \_\_\_\_\_ Lending Practices \_\_\_\_\_ Government \_\_\_\_\_

International Relations \_\_\_\_\_ Environment/Natural Resources/Water \_\_\_\_\_

Social Policy \_\_\_\_\_ Education \_\_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_

**Please** complete this form and **mail it** with your check to: League of Women Voters of Milwaukee County, 1845 N. Farwell Ave., Suite 102, Milwaukee, WI 53202.

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

[league@lwvmilwaukee.org](mailto:league@lwvmilwaukee.org)

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**JOIN UP!  
JOIN IN!**

**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS  
OF MILWAUKEE COUNTY**

