

LWW[®] Bulletin

May 2024

League of Women Voters of Dane County

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Annual Meeting

Tuesday, May 28, 5:30pm – 7:30pm

Capitol Lakes, 333 W Main St, Madison, WI 53703

Join us for the League of Women Voters of Dane County's Annual Meeting

The meeting will be in a hybrid format. Members can attend in person or virtually. Watch the Tuesday Enews for the registration link.

Meeting materials are posted on our website's home page:

www.lwvdanecounty.org



President's Message

Barbara Feeney, president@lwvdanecounty.org

Dear Friends in League,

At the Lively Issues Luncheon on April 13, we had the opportunity to honor two of our members who are marking 50 years as members of the League of Women Voters. Kathy Fullin and Joyce Knutson have achieved a milestone in dedication to the cause of democracy that is rare. We also honored Joy Cardin with the Defender of Democracy Award. This award is given annually to a member who has given outstanding service to LWVDC over a period of years. In addition, each year the League honors one of our community partners who has contributed to our highly successful voter registration program. This year the award was presented to Shelby Fosco, Co-Curricular Program Manager at the Morgridge Center for Public Service, UW-Madison. Take a moment to read their stories in the next few issues of the *Bulletin* and be inspired!

That very evening, I had the chance to staff the League's table at the evening show of Forward Theater's production of "What the Constitution Means to Me." Many people stopped by our table to thank the League of Women Voters for our work as democracy champions. Coming right off honoring three dedicated members earlier in the day, the straight line that runs between our dedicated volunteers and supporters and our effectiveness and reputation in the community was practically glowing fluorescent in my mind's eye.

Related: The passage of two referenda that will result in changes to Wisconsin's Constitution was a disappointment, as the League of Women Voters advised a No vote on both. These amendments on the April 2 ballot were approved by 54% of those voting and are now part of our state constitution. Statewide only 25% of those eligible voted in this primary election so that 13% of the electorate changed our constitution. This is hardly a democratic method of amending the state's governing document.

But here is a silver lining to contemplate: While the referenda passed with 54% of the vote statewide, in Dane County the vote was 70% against passage. That these two seemingly innocuous referenda failed by a huge margin in Dane County and passed with a surprisingly low margin statewide is directly related to the massive "Vote No" campaign led by LWV Wisconsin. Democracy champions like you can take credit.

More referenda are coming up in the elections ahead, and once again, the League of Women Voters will be there. We now need to gear up our advocacy work for the August 13 election, which includes proposals that are intended to change the separation of powers between the legislative and executive branches of state government. We will be preparing and disseminating

materials to again encourage a No vote on these proposed amendments. Expect to learn more in future issues of the *Bulletin*.

On May 28, the LWVDC will hold our Annual Meeting at Capitol Lakes and online. You all should have received a letter and a sample ballot with a stellar lineup of Board candidates. More detailed information is now posted online, and registration will begin soon. I look forward to seeing you as we celebrate another year of “empowering voters, defending democracy.”

Lively Issues Luncheon Recap

Mary Beth Marklein

The U.S. Constitution stood front and center at this year’s Lively Issues Luncheon, held April 13 at the Overture Center for the Arts. The League’s annual celebration of its members was capped off with a viewing of “What the Constitution Means to Me” by the Forward Theater Company.

The award-winning play, which examines the complexities of a legal document designed to protect white male property owners, premiered on Broadway in 2019 and has since been produced by local theater groups around the country. Almost as soon as the Forward Theater Company selected the piece for its 2023-2024 season, the League of Women Voters of Dane County expressed a commitment to promoting the event.

The timing could not have been better given what’s at stake in Wisconsin in 2024. In her opening luncheon remarks, LWVDC program manager Sue Jennik applauded “the tireless work” of many members in advocating for new legislative district maps, but also noted with disappointment the passage in early April of two constitutional amendments aimed at limiting private funding for elections. Jennik also reminded members of more hard work ahead: a primary election in August will propose two amendments regarding the governor’s authority to allocate federal funds. In November, a proposed state constitutional amendment would eliminate the protection of “every citizen” to vote and replace it with “only a citizen” may vote.

“This is a critical year to protect our democracy,” Jennik said.

Among luncheon highlights:

- Shelby Fosco, co-curricular program manager for the Morgridge Center for Public Service at the UW-Madison, received the Outstanding Voter Service Award for her work promoting voter education and engagement among students.

- Joyce Knutson and Kathleen Fullin, a past president, were honored for marking their 50th year of membership in the League.
- The Defender of Democracy Award was awarded to Joy Cardin, who joined the League in 2018, after retiring from Wisconsin Public Radio. Cardin also is on the board of directors for the League of Women Voters of Wisconsin.
- Keynote speaker Julie Swenson, the Forward Theater Company's managing director, offered luncheon attendees some behind-the-scenes tidbits of "What the Constitution Means to Me."

In this issue, we highlight the winners of the Defender of Democracy and Voter Services awards. We will be honoring the 50-year members in the next couple of issues of the *Bulletin*.



Celebrating award winners. From left: Beth Fultz (Director of Voter Service), Joyce Knutson (50 Year Member Award), Shelby Fosco (Voter Services Award), Joy Cardin (Defender of Democracy Award), Kathleen Fullin (50 Year Member Award), Sue Jennik (Director of Program and Advocacy), Barb Feeney (President)



Sadie Dempsey, Civic Engagement & Community Partners Fellow, with the wheel of democracy and buttons.



Welcoming new members.

Photos by Sam Breidenbach



Defender of Democracy Award: Joy Cardin

Joy joined the League of Women Voters of Dane County in 2018, shortly after retiring from Wisconsin Public Radio. Over a span of 31 years at WPR, she served as the News Director, Talk Director, Ideas Network Director, and the Executive Producer and Host of The Joy Cardin Show—a live call-in talk show where she interviewed a wide variety of guests about current issues. She also moderated candidate debates, hosted election coverage, and conducted numerous interviews on many of the issues LWV has also worked on—sometimes with League leaders.

In the years prior to her retirement, Joy became increasingly concerned about what she perceived as a rise of incivility in political discourse, an apathy about voting in state and local elections, as well as increased attempts to spread disinformation and distrust in the news media. She viewed these as threats to our democracy and wanted to continue to counter these efforts once she left WPR. She found the perfect place to do this with the League of Women Voters. She shared the League's mission to empower voters and defend democracy and believed she could use her broadcast journalism skills to help do this.

Joy grew up in a politically diverse family in Appleton, Wisconsin during the tumultuous 1960s and 70s. Watching the evening news and candidate debates were “must see” TV. Dinner table discussions about the Vietnam War, the ERA, and other issues of the day were routine. Her father wrote letters to the editor, her mother called into local talk radio programs, they voted in every election, sometimes for different candidates, and they instilled a sense of civic duty in Joy and her seven older siblings.

Since joining the League of Women Voters, Joy has worked on organizing and moderating several forums on various election issues, restoring reproductive rights, gerrymandering, the importance of DEI programs, and many others. She has participated in voter registration drives, conducted candidate interviews, and moderated candidate forums. She has helped organize Lively Issues Luncheons, including this one!

While being an active member of the Dane County League, Joy has also been serving on the board of directors for the LWV of Wisconsin since 2019, she is the president of her Madison neighborhood association, and was the co-president of the former Madison Civics Club. She serves on the board of the Dane County Humane Society and just became a member of the board of the Attic Angel Community. She is a member of the Rotary Club of Madison and TEMPO Madison, among others. She is also a city of Madison Election Official.

Joy has a degree in Communications from UW-Stevens Point and worked as a news reporter/anchor at WSAW TV in Wausau and WLUK TV in Green Bay prior to joining WPR. She was recently inducted into the Milwaukee Press Club's Hall of Fame for her service to the community and to the journalism profession.

Joy lives with her husband Rob Starbuck and her two orange kittens Jay and Juna in Madison's Midvale Heights neighborhood. She loves to travel—and just returned from experiencing the total eclipse of the sun in Cleveland.



Voter Services Award: Shelby Fosco

Shelby Fosco, a native of West Dundee, Illinois, earned her Bachelor of Arts in Communication from the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater and her Master of Science in Education Administration and Student Affairs from Texas A&M University. Presently, she holds the position of Co-Curricular Programs Manager at the University of Wisconsin Morgridge Center for Public Service. In this role, Fosco plays a key part in fostering civic engagement among students. She serves as the Co-Chair of the BadgersVote coalition, working closely with student interns to promote campus voter participation.

Additionally, Fosco collaborates with various campus, community, and national organizations to ensure that UW-Madison students have access to the tools and resources needed to engage fully in the electoral process. Her dedication to empowering young people to become active citizens underscores her commitment to creating a more informed and participatory society.

The 9 Best Things about Registering Voters at the DMV

Laura Gottlieb (she/her/hers), lauragottlieb212@gmail.com

1. Helping to increase voter turnout in Wisconsin elections.
2. Participating in democracy's most basic component—voting—and encouraging others to do the same.
3. Making people aware of an upcoming election, informing them about voting, and showing them that voting matters.
4. It's easy! Online voter registration at the DMV is the easiest way of registering voters because, by the time they have finished their DMV business, most clients have current proof of identity and residency documents in hand!
5. Being comfortable! Ample parking, air-conditioning, heating, bathrooms, water fountains, and chairs are available. Online scheduling allows you to work when it's convenient: email reminders of your shifts will be sent to you. All supplies are provided, including the DMV's computer kiosk dedicated to myvote.wi.gov. Moreover, the LWV has written approval from the state head of the DMV to help people register to vote there, and the staff are friendly.
6. Working with other friendly, competent, and dedicated volunteers. You may make friends!
7. Everyone comes to the DMV! People who might not have been invited to register to vote anywhere else come to the DMV.
8. Uncertain? Lacking confidence? Get support from expert project coordinators. You will receive written instructions and video links about how to be a greeter or a lead. You can sign up for your first shift with an experienced lead who will train you. During voter

registration drives, a project coordinator is always available by phone to answer questions.

9. Enjoy the experience. Volunteers say:

- "This makes me feel like I'm making a difference."
- "I am honored to take part in this project."
- "So many people were very appreciative of the help we gave them and of our being at the DMV."

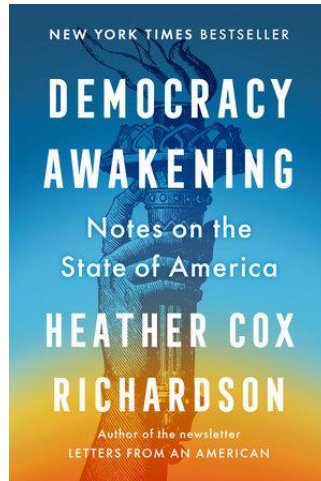
Please join us in the 5th successful Dane County voter registration drive at the DMV from June 3-July 24. The voter registration drive precedes the August 13 primary election for candidates for the U.S. House of Representatives, U.S. Senate, and Wisconsin legislature. Constitutional amendments will also appear on this ballot. Sign-up dates are already open for at the links below. Please sign up for as many shifts as you can. Training materials will be emailed to you.

- [East Side DMV](#)
- [West Side DMV](#)

Questions? Contact Laura Gottlieb at 608-698-8897 or lauragottlieb212@gmail.com.



Lead volunteer instructs another on the MyVote kiosk. Photo by Mary Detert.



BOOK DISCUSSION

***Democracy Awakening: Notes on the State of America*, by Heather Cox Richardson**

If you prefer your historical perspective on the development and struggles of American democracy in small, digestible bites, you are ready for our next book, Heather Cox Richardson's *Democracy Awakening: Notes on the State of America*. Richardson walks us from what she calls the first founding—the Declaration of Independence with its clear statement of equality and the compromises of the Constitution that continue to enshrine inequality—through efforts to make the Declaration a reality.

In a conversational tone the author takes us through events such as the Civil War, the New Deal, the Civil Rights Act and efforts to overthrow a growing “liberal consensus” that government exists to promote the common good and work toward equality in a multiracial society. She highlights those who stood firm to preserve and advance American democracy in the face of growing inequality and divisiveness. This is a book that can be read all at once or in snippets, but however you read it, you will want to return to it in the future.

Even if you haven't read the entire book, you are welcome to participate. While it is hard to recommend chapters, those pressed for time are encouraged to read the Foreword and the Conclusion, “Reclaiming Our Country.”

Discussion Dates & Times:

- Tuesday, May 14, 2024, 10:00am-11:30am via Zoom
 - Saturday, May 18,, 2024, 10:00am-11:30am via Zoom
-

Please indicate your interest in participating by emailing books@lwvdanecounty.org with the date you would like to join.

There is a lot going on with LWVDC these days!

Want to stay on top of the most current happenings?

Look for our weekly Enews in your email every Tuesday,
or [subscribe here](#) if you don't receive it.

Join a Discussion Unit!

Aileen Nettleton, Discussion Unit Coordinator

Would you like to share your reactions about issues raised in forums with others? Hear what others' responses are? Consider what actions you might take related to the issues? Did you have suggestions for how to get out the word about voting issues after the last forum? Are you interested in getting to know other League members?

If so, we invite you to join one of our Discussion Unit groups! You can indicate your interest by marking the "Unit Discussions to discuss forum presentations" on the Annual Member Survey with your membership renewal this summer. Or you can check the [League website for unit meetings](#) and contact a unit leader.

There are five Discussion Units that meet in months when there are Forums to delve more deeply into the issues addressed by the speakers and plan related actions. Unit meetings take place on different days, times, and both in-person and virtually to meet your schedule and preferred mode. Leaders welcome more members.

Once you indicate your general interest, we will contact you about which group might be your choice to join. The Virtual Dane County group holds all their discussions on Zoom. On the Eastside, the Prairie Ridge Oakwood group meets in-person and includes watching part of the recorded forum with lively discussions following. The Downtown group meets in-person at Capitol Lakes Retirement Center, just off the Square, with BYO "dinner" for social time followed by the discussion. Two groups meet on the Westside with in-person meetings for good-weather months and Zoom meetings during winter months. All enjoy a combination of insightful discussions along with social time together.

The Program Committee prepares helpful Resource Materials with discussion questions for each forum to add background information and direction for our discussions.

Many thanks to our unit leaders for coordinating and conducting our monthly discussions this year: Alan Zuckerman (Prairie Ridge Oakwood), Karen Gunderson (Virtual Dane County), Ingrid Rothe with me (Downtown), Kathy Johnson with Cara Mahaney (West), and Helen Horn and Ralph Petersen (West-Middleton).

League News & Updates

Contributions

General Donations

Amy Schulz & David Welo

Sustaining Donations

Joseph King

Zachary Levin

Additional Gift with Membership

Sue Bangert

Annette Czarnecki

Britnay Paffel

Cari Redington

J Silva

New Members

We welcome these new members who joined us recently. An [updated member directory](#) is available on our website.

Do you want to join the League? [Sign up for a membership online](#)

Sue Bangert

Deborah Best

Annette Czarnecki

Sandra Freeman

Sarah Humphries

Mike Kimball

Sophie Kramer

Lynne Ostrowski

Britnay Paffel

Wynona Pyrtel

Cari Redington

J Silva

Upcoming Events

Check [the calendar](#) for information about upcoming events.

Executive Committee

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Governance

Jill Jokela, Fund Development
Director

Sue Jennik, Program Director

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Brook Soltvedt, Webmaster

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