

President's Message

Ready for a fresh new year? A light covering of snow was on the ground when I woke up this morning reminding me that a fresh, clean year beckons. Come January each year people make New Year's resolutions. In the League we call it Program Planning. This January program planning takes place at the local and national level. We have position statements that define issues we members have studied over time (www.milwaukee.org). Click on, "Stands on Issues." Now is when we decide if they are still pertinent and if there are other areas we wish to study. Because of the wide range of topics, we must set priorities and focus our efforts where there is member interest and an opportunity to make a difference. This is done at the local level during January unit meetings, reviewed by the board and then approved at the annual meeting in May. Check out the new national website (www.lwv.org) and investigate LWVUS program and priorities. Help us decide where we should be spending our time and effort for the next two years.



We are in year two of a new national study, Privatization of Government services, assets and functions, and the impact on local communities. Please attend our general meeting on Saturday, January 21st. We will follow up with units and member consensus on Wednesday, March 21st. More information is available on our website. See "[Current Issues Under Study](#)."

Implementing Voter ID in Wisconsin will be a focus of our League the next few months. Please join other Leaguers in action as we work with community groups to ensure that ALL eligible citizens in Wisconsin are able to exercise their right to vote. Get ready, Get set, Vote!

Wishing you and your family a healthy and Happy New Year,

Mary Kae Nelson

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LWV Milwaukee County is now a 501(c)(3) organization and has tax deductible status. Remember, Your Donation to LWV Milwaukee County is critical to our Organization!

League members are undeniably generous, so as the year comes to a close, don't forget to join your peers in donating to the League of Women Voters Milwaukee County. You can ASSURE DEMOCRACY WORKS by making your contribution today. We need your support. Your tax-deductible donation will fund operations in support of education and information services that are so important to League. Here in Milwaukee, we are the organization providing voter registration for new citizens, conducting candidate forums, bringing our Voter Guides to the community and working with other community groups implementing Voter ID so more Wisconsin citizens get their documentation, get their photo ID and exercise their right to vote. WE need you more than ever. No donation is too small. Every contribution is significant!

CALENDAR

January 2012			
5	Thu	9 am, 11 am	Naturalization/New Voter Registration Federal Courthouse, 517 E. Wisconsin Ave. Contact: Dorothy Sherman, 414-425-9527 or Sharon Munson, 414-358-8393
5	Thu	12 noon	Voter Service Group 1845 N. Farwell. Contact: Mary Kae Nelson, 414-964-9988
11	Wed	6 pm	Board Meeting 1845 N. Farwell. Contact: Mary Kae Nelson, 414-964-9988
12	Thu	10 am	International Relations Committee—Great Decisions St. Matthew's EV Lutheran Church, 1615 N. Wauwatosa Ave, Wauwatosa. Contact: Ned Maxwell, 414-258-9222 or Gloria Weiskotten, 414-354-9783
18	Wed	12 noon	Membership Committee Meeting Beverly Katter's House 1229 N Jackson St, Unit 203 Contact Beverly at 414-277-9158
19	Thu	9 am, 11 am 1 pm, 3 pm	Naturalization/New Voter Registration Federal Courthouse, 517 E. Wisconsin Ave. Contact: Dorothy Sherman, 414-425-9527 or Sharon Munson, 414-358-8393
21	Sat	9 am-11 am	General Meeting: Privatization of Government Services Wauwatosa Public Library, Firefly Room North Avenue and N. 76 th St. See p. 7 for details.
23	Mon	6 pm	Natural Resources Committee Shorewood Village Center (below the Shorewood Library). Contact: Helga Guequierre, 414-255-0460
25	Wed	1:15 pm	Unit Discussions: National and Local Program Making Afternoon Unit West: St. Matthew's EV Lutheran Church, 1615 N. Wauwatosa Ave Contact: Gloria Weiskotten, 414-354-9783
		6 pm	Evening Unit East: Shorewood Village Center (below the Shorewood Library) Contact: Barb Hussin, 414-351-0819
		7:00 pm	Evening Unit West: Contact Ruth Snedic for location 414-771-7690
February 2012—Youth Voter Month			
8	Wed	6 pm	Board Meeting 1845 N. Farwell. Contact: Mary Kae Nelson, 414-964-9988
9	Thu		Bulletin Deadline
9	Thu	10 am	International Relations Committee—Great Decisions St. Matthew's EV Lutheran Church, 1615 N. Wauwatosa Ave, Wauwatosa. Contact: Ned Maxwell, 414-258-9222 or Gloria Weiskotten, 414-354-9783
14	Tue		League's 92nd Birthday - Support Voter Turnout at Primary Election
16	Thu	9 am, 11 am 1 pm, 3 pm	Naturalization/New Voter Registration Federal Courthouse, 517 E. Wisconsin Ave. Contact: Dorothy Sherman, 414-425-9527 or Sharon Munson, 414-358-8393
21	Tue	7 am—8 pm	Spring Primary Elections: Presidential Primary, Judicial & Municipal Races VOTE! Election Night Reporting
27	Mon	6 pm	Natural Resources Committee Shorewood Village Center (below the Shorewood Library). Contact: Brenda Costigan, 414702-0997.

Program Planning – Essential to a Grass Roots Organization

Sarajane Kennedy

Every two years state and local Leagues and ILO's participate in the LWVUS Program Planning process by making recommendations concerning program issues – this is one of the ways we remain a grassroots organization. The Program Planning process is an important League tool for identifying issues for study, review and update or concurrence.

It is usual to look at recommendations for a local study as well at this time, and because the state League now allows yearly input for state study recommendations, we may also consider program options at the state level. We will devote January units to this process.

Selecting an issue for study

Program, a three-part process that is a core component of the League's mission, is composed of program planning, study and consensus, and advocacy. While it is important for every League to hold a Program Planning meeting to discuss possible issues for study at all three levels, it is not required that we select an issue. At the national League level, ***local and state Leagues and ILO's have the option to propose one new study, or one review and update, or one concurrence or to make no recommendation***

The program planning process starts with the January unit meetings, so it is critical that members prepare for this process by reviewing current positions, especially national positions, and attend a January unit meeting.

In evaluating possible issues for a new study, ask yourself:

- Is there widespread member interest?
- Is this a timely issue?
- Is government action the most effective way to address the problem?

The best way to prepare for participation in Program Planning is by looking at *Impact on Issues, 2010-2012*, which is available on the LWVUS website at www.lwv.org. You will find the *LWWI State Position Papers* at

www.lwvwi.org. You will find our local League positions at www.lwvmilwaukee.org.

Positions at each level have come out of member agreement on previous studies and these positions allow us to take action on policies and legislation as appropriate on national, state, and local levels.

The last LWVUS program planning process led to the adoption of the two current national studies on the Role of the Federal Government in Education (the subject of our consensus meetings in October) and Privatization (the subject of our upcoming January general meeting and of unit meetings scheduled for March). While we have not had a LWVWI study for a couple of years, a study of Judicial Recusal has been suggested for our consideration. And locally, at our last annual meeting we adopted a one-year study of electrical energy use by county and local municipalities. That will be the topic of our April general meeting and could be a good local study item to recommend extending for another year.

Program Making Unit Discussion Meetings: Wednesday January 25. See [Website](#) for times and locations.

Timeline for National Program Planning

January -- February 2012 – Leagues provide opportunities for members to participate in LWVUS Program Planning.

March 1, 2012 – Deadline for receipt of online response forms from each local league board

March 2012 -- LWVUS Board Meeting – LWVUS Program Planning Committee analyzes response form responses and drafts proposal for LWVUS board review.

March 2012 – LWVUS board considers draft and approves a Proposed Program for 2012-2014.

April-May 2012 – Proposed program will be posted on the website.

June 2012 – Convention delegates adopt 2012-2014 LWVUS program after debate and discussion, as well as any not-recommended items granted consideration by convention.

July 2012-June 2014 – LWVUS board implements adopted program.

Lake Michigan League of Women Voters Annual Meeting 10/22/11

Jennifer Runquist, WI LMLWV Alternate

The meeting took place at the Hilton Oak Lawn in Oak Lawn, IL. The LMLWV has improved communication by developing a website, lakemichiganlww.wordpress.com, and a quarterly newsletter "Splash", according to President Judy Johnston. Also the group is networking with other environmental groups: Healing Our Waters (HOW), Alliance for the Great Lakes, Freshwater Future, and Save the Dunes. Adoption of the LWV of Michigan's Great Lakes Ecosystem Position by concurrence by all state leagues surrounding the Great Lakes Ecosystem is being pursued. The LWVWI signed on at our 2011 Annual Meeting.

The **LMLWV Program for 2011-2012** remains the same as last year including protection and restoration of the Great Lakes, public education on problems of Lake Michigan and support of relevant scientific research. We want to restore water quality, clean up toxic pollution, and address permitted discharges in the Great Lakes. We wish to control and prevent invasive species and mitigate global warming impacts. We will advocate for water conservation and monitor implementation of the Great Lakes Compact and monitor the progress of the Review of the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement, being updated by the International Joint Commission.

Representatives from the 4 states surrounding Lake Michigan each gave reports. For **Illinois**, Asian carp, hydraulic fracturing for oil and gas resulting in water pollution, pollution permits for factory farms and pharmaceutical disposal collection are concerns. For **Indiana**, the ruling to keep the Chicago and O'Brien Locks open in spite of the Asian carp and dredging for PCBs were concerns. **Michigan** is seeing an increase in sea lampreys, and is hoping that tribal fishing rights might assist in the fight about closing locks leading into the Great Lakes, due to the Asian carp threat. **Wisconsin** representatives are following the proposal that Grafton, Cedarburg and Mequon might switch to Lake Michigan water from well water. WI court developments regarding the regulation of ballast water are also being followed. Jennifer Runquist, the WI LMLWV alternate, provided information on MMSD's efforts to prevent sewerage overflows to Lake Michigan. An update was also provided on the human sewerage contamination of Milwaukee County's storm sewer infrastructure and the Watershed-Based Permitting Storm Water Pilot Projects being sponsored by EPA Region 5 for the KK, Menomonee, and Milwaukee Rivers and the Milwaukee Harbor Estuary.

At the Friday night dinner, **Todd Main, Deputy Director Illinois DNR**, spoke about Asian carp and the Millennium Reserve Initiative. Saturday breakfast speaker **Debra Shore, Commissioner of the Chicago Metropolitan Water Reclamation District**, spoke about the billions of gallons of sewerage, storm water runoff and rain with which the district is trying to cope by use of sewerage plants, tunnels, holding areas, disinfection procedures. They would really like to see improved water quality due to tourism and safety for water users. **Judy Beck, Lake Michigan Manager, US EPA Great Lakes National Program Office**, gave her State of the Lake talk at lunch. Lake Michigan is surrounded by 46,000 sq. mi, which is 40% forest, 12 % wetland, 31% Ag and 7% developed. EPA is providing funds to remove fish barriers on streams, increase native species such as sturgeon, sustain the flyway for 5 million birds, recover wetlands, figure out excess nutrient problems, deal with invasives, remove sediments and improve the 10 Areas of Concern (AOCs) around Lake Michigan. The Milwaukee estuary is an AOC. This was a great Annual Meeting! Next year will be in Indiana.

Privatization of Government Services

Sarajane Kennedy

Scope of the Study:

The purpose of this LWWUS study is to identify those parameters and policy issues to be considered in connection with proposals to transfer federal, state or local government services, assets and/or functions to the private sector.

In articles listed below and found on the LWWUS website, www.lwv.org, and as a link on our website, www.lwvmilwaukee.org, the national study committee provides for League members and the public a history and background of privatization; a glossary of terms; legal issues to be considered when privatizing at different levels of government; current state regulations on privatizing; and case studies on successful and unsuccessful privatizing efforts. The committee also provides suggested policies and parameters to be considered when privatizing, reviews the stated goals and the community impact of such transfers, and identifies strategies to ensure transparency, accountability, and preservation of the common good.

Background Materials

- Subcontracting Public Education
- Privatization of Prisons
- Privatization of a Publicly Owned Waste Water Treatment Plant
- Deregulation of Railroads

The Legal Framework of Transparency and Accountability within the Context of Privatization

Executive Summary

The legal frameworks within which public and private sector entities operate differ. One difference is that, unlike private entities, government entities are statutorily required to conduct their business through open, transparent processes to ensure that they are accountable to the citizenry. This modern practice of open government is viewed as both a key feature and a necessary condition of a contemporary democratic state. It is based upon the conviction that the people can only effectively exercise their constitutional role as overseers of government action where their unfettered rights of access to information about government operations are secure.

Public transparency laws thus have been enacted throughout the United States at both the federal and state level for the purpose of maintaining free and open access to the government's proceedings, deliberations, decision-making and records. Such laws include sunshine or open meeting laws, which seek to ensure that the public may observe the meetings and deliberations of government bodies, and freedom of information or public record acts, which seek to ensure public access to the documents and records of government.

Privatization raises particular issues with respect to transparency, however, because as a general matter, such transparency laws apply exclusively to public bodies, and not to private entities. Where the provision of government services are transferred into private hands, what then becomes of the public's right of access to information regarding the provision of those services?

Judicial and legislative efforts to address concerns regarding public transparency within the context of privatization have emerged over several years. Some state courts, for instance, have adopted a judicial doctrine that subjects a private contractor to the applicable transparency law when the contractor is performing a government function in such a manner that it may be deemed the "functional equivalent of the public body." In addition, state legislatures have been modifying their public accountability statutes over the years in order to make such laws applicable to certain private entities carrying out government functions. Public accountability advocates nonetheless are concerned that public access to information in the hands of private contractors often is frustrated when statutory language does not adequately cover the private entity or a court ruling is not obtained. Moreover, even when private contractors are subject to such laws, they often dispute it or are not aware of such requirements, and, thus, refuse to provide the information.

A recent example involves one of the nation's largest not-for-profit providers of community-based supervision

and treatment services to individuals within the criminal justice systems. The company is 97 percent publicly funded from sources such as state departments of corrections and the federal prison bureau. Following revelations of certain unusual and high profile expenditures by the private contractor in Kentucky (including hundreds of thousands of dollars in stadium suites, sponsorship of a university basketball team and extravagant social events), the Kentucky state auditor sought to examine how its tax dollars were being spent. The private contractor, however, refused to provide the state auditor with the requested financial information, and neither the state public records law nor any decision by a state court required the contractor to provide the information. This case illustrates the importance of yet another approach to ensuring public accessibility of information and records in the hands of a private contractor: that is, using the bidding or contract negotiation process of the privatization deal itself to require agreement on the part of the private contractor to make all pertinent information available to the government agency with which it is contracting before any privatization of services is put in place.

Finally, this paper concludes with a call by accountability advocates for special transparency requirements to apply to any privatization proposal. The notion, here, is that government action to privatize is of such import and consequence that special (super) public accountability procedures should apply with respect to the initial privatization decision itself in order to ensure the proper constitutional role of the people as overseers of government action.

Diane Dilanni

International Relations

Ned Maxwell, Chair

The International Affairs committee will continue concentrating on the Great Decisions forums in a monthly schedule at St. Matthews church on the corner of 76th and Milwaukee Avenues in Wauwatosa on the second Thursday of the month at 10 AM, starting on Thursday, January 12th, 2012. We will be showing a half hour DVD regarding the topic at hand and then we will discuss it afterward.

The first discussion will be doubly interesting considering that the *Time* Person of the Year is the protestor that has changed the face of the Middle East.

As the popular revolts and upheaval of the Arab Spring have radically changed the face of the Middle East, what lies ahead for the Middle East's transition to democracy? What are the prospects for the governments that have held out in this new order? With many longtime U.S. allies ousted, how will the U.S. recalibrate its relations with the new regimes? These and other topics will be discussed.

At the January 9th meeting we will discuss "Promoting Democracy," pro or con. Is this a good idea? Did you like Iraq? Or Israel?

Join League members and guests for a public meeting on the

Privatization of Government Services

Saturday, January 21, 2012

Wauwatosa Public Library, Firefly Room,

North Avenue and N. 76th Street

9:00a.m. to 11:00 a.m.

Hear local municipal and county officials discuss the pros and cons of privatization of government services and address examples of such within Milwaukee County.

This is the second of two general meetings on the LWVUS national study of Privatization of Government Services (the first was last January) in preparation for consensus meetings in March, 2012.

On Membership

Chris Weber Sponnick, Chair

Just think how many opportunities there will be in 2012 for Leaguer involvement: candidate forums, voter registrations, election night reporting, election observing, Voters' Guide, actions to support voter turnout, in addition to regular League happenings: committee meetings, general meetings, units, board meetings. WHEW!! Be sure to check our web based calendar for up-to-date details at lwvmilwaukee.org. Your involvement is needed and appreciated in any of the activities that interest you and fit into your schedule. We have a lot of work to do to promote democratic and civic engagement. Mention your involvement to family, friends, work and other organization associates and invite them to accompany you to League events. **TALK UP YOUR ENTHUSIASM FOR LEAGUE AND INVITE OTHERS TO JOIN.** Excite others with your excitement. Let's promote the League of Women Voters along with our civic activities.

New Members

Gloria Weiskotten, Membership Committee

Jean Davis is retired having worked as an accountant. She is involved with family especially with her three grandchildren. She first joined League when she lived in Texas. She rejoined League to receive the information about issues and bills and believes letter writing to legislators is important and effective. She is unable to drive at night.

Peggy Creer remembers the wonderful national debates. She is interested in anything that promotes civic engagement. Peggy's work experience has been in business communications and business writing.

Another orientation for new and prospective members is scheduled for Sunday, March 4th. See our web [calendar](#) for details.



Mary Kae Nelson explains how the League works to prospective members at the last New Member Orientation in November.

LWV Milwaukee County is now a 501(c)(3) organization and has tax deductible status. Your tax deductible donation will fund operations in support of education and information services that are so important to League. No donation is too small. Every contribution is significant!

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

Email Address: league@milwaukee.org

Milwaukee County Dues (Circle One):

\$65 Individual \$90 Household (2 or more persons) \$25 Student \$100 (supports \$25 memberships)
\$165 Centennial (supports action & activities) *Financial support available upon request—call 414-964-9988*

Name _____ Home Phone (____) _____

Address _____ Work /Cell Phone (____) _____

City _____ WI Zip _____ e-mail _____

Interests: Voter Service ____ Lending Practices ____ Government ____ International Relations ____
Environment/Natural Resources/Water ____ Health Care/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,

OR join online at: <http://lwvmilwaukee.org>. If you would prefer to receive your copy of *The Voter* electronically, please email us at league@milwaukee.org. Thank you!

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Join In!

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
OF MILWAUKEE COUNTY

