



## President's Message

Our 2011-2012 program year is off to a great start.

Voter ID is a hot topic right now. Implementing Wisconsin's new Voter ID Law will be the topic of November's combined units. The Government Accountability Board (GAB) will have a presentation about the changes in registering new voters because of changes in the law. We will also have time to strategize how our League and other groups can help Wisconsin citizens get the documentation needed to register to vote.

Our Kick Off Supper and our general meeting, "The Role of the Federal Government in Public Education" were both very well received. Thank you to Chris Weber Spornick and her membership committee as well as to Joann Kreimendahl, Sharon Munson and their education committee for two very successful events.



Last year, our members asked for more unit meetings. A unit is a small group which meets to discuss and reach consensus, vote on program issues and support the League in action. Member consensus on the education study was the focus of our two October unit meetings. At the Education general meeting in September, the panel of experts had great, up-to-date information for us. Their expertise, along with the background information provided by the national League, enabled us to reach consensus, or member agreement.

Joanne and Michael Barndt, along with Mary Goode, are hosting our Holiday Social in a new location, St. John's Tower on Prospect Avenue. They are looking forward to greeting you on Dec. 4th.

Thank you to our board members and committee members for the work they do for the League. We appreciate you. Keep up the good work! A special thanks to Carolyn Castore and our New Citizen/New Voter committee members. The new Voter ID legislation has drastically changed how we register new citizens to vote in Wisconsin. They have been working on getting our New Voter Guide approved and printed. Please encourage you friends and family to become involved and to support us in our efforts to educate the public, to increase awareness of new Voter ID regulations, and to encourage voter participation of all Wisconsin residents. That's what the League is all about.

Looking forward to seeing you at a League event,

*Mary Kae Nelson*

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## Election Night Reporting

Louise Petering, Coordinator

Come Tuesday, February 21 and April 3, 2012 our League will again be reporting election results from Southeast Wisconsin sites to Wisconsin Election Service (WES) and selected media outlets. Be prepared for interesting times as the Voter ID bill takes full effect, requiring voters to show a photo ID to vote. I will be contacting our veteran reporters in December and January to begin filling reporting slots. Of course, I always welcome new reporters, so please phone me at 414-351-3617 to let me know if you would like to travel to a reporting site, observe the tally and phone in election results.

# CALENDAR

November 2011			
8	Tue	6:15-8 pm	<b>Combined Units: Meeting the Challenges of Voter ID</b> Speaker: Adam Harvell, Public Outreach Elections Division, GAB Alverno College Conference Center, 43 <sup>rd</sup> St. and Morgan Ave, Milwaukee Contact: Carol Wichmann, 414-529-4370, or Louise Petering, 414-351-3617
9	Wed	6 pm	<b>Board Meeting</b> 1845 N. Farwell Contact: Mary Kae Nelson, 414-964-9988
9	Wed	10 am	<b>Naturalization/New Voter Registration</b> Federal Courthouse, 517 E. Wisconsin Ave. Contact: Dorothy Sherman, 414-425-9527 or Sharon Munson, 414-358-8393.
10	Thu	10 am	<b>International Relations/Great Decisions Discussion Group</b> St. Matthew's EV Lutheran Church, 1615 N. Wauwatosa Ave, Wauwatosa. Contact: Ned Maxwell, 414-258-9222 or Gloria Weiskotten, 414-354-9783.
13	Sun	3 pm	<b>New Member Orientation, see p. 6 for details.</b>
19	Sat	TBA	<b>Naturalization/New Voter Registration</b> Folk Fair, State Fair Park Contact: Sharon Munson, 414-358-8393, or Joann Kreimendahl, 262-255-2127
24	Thur		<b>THANKSGIVING</b>
28	Mon	6 pm	<b>Natural Resources Committee</b> Shorewood Village Center (below the library) 3920 N. Murray Ave, Shorewood Contact: Helga Guequierre 414-225-0460, or Brenda Costigan, 414-702-0997
December 2011			
1	Thu	10 am	<b>Naturalization/New Voter Registration</b> Federal Courthouse, 517 E. Wisconsin Ave. Contact: Dorothy Sherman, 414-425-9527 or Sharon Munson, 414-358-8393.
4	Sun	4 to 6 pm	<b>WINTER SOCIAL</b> , see p. 7
9	Fri		<b>Bulletin Deadline</b>
14	Wed	6 pm	<b>Board Meeting</b> 1845 N. Farwell Contact: Mary Kae Nelson, 414-964-9988
15	Thu	9 am 11 am 1 pm 3 pm	<b>Naturalization/New Voter Registration</b> Federal Courthouse, 517 E. Wisconsin Ave. Contact: Dorothy Sherman, 414-425-9527 or Sharon Munson, 414-358-8393.



## 2011 Issues Briefing

Carol Wichmann

The League of Women Voters of Wisconsin held an Issues Briefing on Saturday, October 8, in Madison. Ten Milwaukee County members attended along with approximately fifty League members from around the state. The program was extensive, covering five important issues:

- The Implications of Wisconsin's new Voter ID Law and why the LWVWI is challenging the law in state court
- The importance of open government in Wisconsin
- Why the Clean Air Act is critical to protecting public health
- The League's 501(c)(3) group tax exemption
- Jobs and the economy in Wisconsin

Regarding the first topic, a date to actually file the lawsuit has not been set. The law firm bringing the lawsuit and the League are open to other plaintiffs joining the suit to help with arguments and the associated expenses. Members were encouraged to make a tax deductible contribution to the League's Education Fund to help defray expenses. Checks should be made payable to *LWVWI Education Fund* with "lawsuit" noted on the check and sent to the LWVWI, 612 W. Main St. #200, Madison, WI 53703. **See Ed.'s note p. 4.**

Andrea Kaminski, Executive Director, announced that the WI League has obtained IRS confirmation of our 501(c)(3) status which extends to all local branches of the WI League. Thus, future dues payments will be tax deductible up to an annual maximum of \$75 and purchases made on behalf of the League will no longer be subject to state sales tax. This was good news for League members.

All of the materials discussed at the Issues Briefing are available at the State League's Web Site, [www.lwvwi.org](http://www.lwvwi.org), on the News and Events page, [here](#).

### The Importance of Open Government in Wisconsin

Louise Petering, Director

Wisconsin has good "right to know" laws, like the 1981 Open Records and 1983 Open Meetings Laws, according to Bill Leuders, President of the WI Freedom of Information Council. However, he cautions that impediments to "knowing" still exist. They may include high charges for locating and copying records, deliberate delays in providing records, the absence of state-wide rules for retention of email records, and a rule exempting prosecutors' documents from open records requests, thereby effectively rendering unavailable those police records contained in prosecutors' records. Importantly, draft legislation is currently exempt from the Open Records Law, but, Leuders insists, once circulated beyond the author's office, draft legislation should be available under the Open Records Law. Interestingly, Leuders disagrees with expunging information from the online database used for background checks on individuals, the Consolidated Court Automation Programs (CCAP). He argues that it is important for our judicial system to show itself to be just. Hence, CCAP should include all kinds of decisions - innocent, acquitted, dismissed, guilty. No doubt the tension between privacy and the public right to know will persist, but his argument persuaded me that no information should be deleted. What do you think?

Note: Leuders is also Director of *Money & Politics Project* at the WI Center for Investigative Journalism.

## Voter ID meets the LWVWI

Carolyn Castore

The Voter ID bill was passed and signed into law in June. Since then, the LWV has been very active. We monitored its “soft” implementation during the recalls, documenting the challenges for both voters and poll workers. Our report made headlines around the state. This shows what a determined group of volunteers can accomplish.

The LWVWI was asked to be the plaintiff in a lawsuit against the Voter ID law and we agreed. The suit contends that, under the Wisconsin Constitution, the legislature did not have the authority to pass the bill. Wisconsin is unusual in that voting is an explicit right, made so in the 1980’s via an amendment. That amendment states that all Wisconsin citizens over the age of 18 can vote. It also gives the legislature certain areas in which it can pass laws. It can set residency requirements, regulate absentee voting and registration. However, the Constitution states that the only two classes of citizens who may be restricted from voting are felons and those under legal guardianship.

Our contention, in the lawsuit, is that by preemptorily disallowing someone to vote because they do not show an acceptable photo ID, the legislature overstepped its authority. We expect the lawsuit to be filed in the next few weeks.

The League is continuing to work with other groups that are exploring filing a federal lawsuit, contending it does not meet federal constitutional requirements.

The Milwaukee League is also very involved with a number of other non-partisan groups that are concerned that people do not lose their right to vote. We are building a strategy for assuring that everyone who wants to vote is able to vote. Part of that is by registering people now—since same day registration is now more difficult. Part is by helping people obtain their free state ID cards.

We need your support on both fronts. The lawsuit will be expensive, so contributions are welcome. And ensuring that people can vote will take some volunteer hours. Let the office know if you are interested. Visit the website at <http://www.lwvwi.org/> for more information.

**Editor’s note: The League of Women Voters of Wisconsin Education Network filed suit in Dane County Circuit Court on October 20, 2011 challenging Wisconsin’s new voter ID law.**

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Pictures below from September’s General Meeting “The Role of the Federal Government in Public Education”



Sarajane Kennedy and Louise Petering



Moderator Sharon Munson with panelists Rita Nawrocki-Chabin, Dr. James Shaw, and Marlene Gross-Ackeret

# Natural Resources

Two of our Natural Resource Committee members attended conferences in October. Jennifer Runquest attended the Lake Michigan League of Women Voters Annual Meeting in the Chicago area and will give a full report in the January/February edition of *The Voter*. Below is a summary of their Great Lakes Ecosystem Position and a link to the full paper.

Helen Guequierre went to Detroit for the Biennial International Joint Commission (IJC) Meeting. The IJC is a joint American-Canadian organization established by the 1909 Boundary Waters Treaty. The theme of the 2011 Great Lakes Water Quality Biennial Meeting was "H2O NOW" emphasizing the pressing need for action to protect and restore the Great Lakes. Below is Helen's report.

## Rationale for Adoption of the Great Lakes Ecosystem Position

Jennifer Runquist

The Lake Michigan LWV made the request for basin-wide adoption of their Great Lakes Ecosystem position because its member Leagues within the Lake Michigan basin know their elected state representatives and how to contact them. "Lobbying our governmental representatives as a League of Women Voters member adds a recognized sanction and authority to our lobbying activities. If all the states that border on one of the Great Lakes had available an adopted League position on the Great Lakes Ecosystem for use as a reference, members would then be authorized to lobby legislators in the name of the League of Women Voters of their respective states on issues related to the Great Lakes."

Once a state league adopts a position, then state member leagues can advocate using the position. [Here](#) is the Great Lakes Ecosystem Position.

Find out where to recycle in your area by visiting [earth911.com](http://earth911.com). Just enter your ZIP Code and the category of the product you want to recycle!

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## International Joint Commission

Helen Guequierre

The reports and workshops held at the IJC Biennial meeting at Wayne State University in Detroit, October 12 - 14, 2011, presented the recommendations of the Commission. The reports and workshops by members of the IJC Boards and the US EPA and Environment Canada evaluated the present condition of the Great Lakes and strongly recommend that "a revised agreement should be strengthened with explicit provisions to address threats to near-shore water quality and to prevent or reduce their impact on human and ecological health". The scientists presented their reasoning for each recommendation and workshop participants responded and made additional suggestions. The topics included Nuisance and Harmful Algae, Nearshore Framework, Chemicals of Emerging Concern, Aquatic Invasive Species, Microbiological Quality of Great Lakes Beaches.

A highlight of the meeting was a keynote address by Vice President Al Gore. He emphasized the connection between Climate Change and its effect on the Great Lakes. He concluded with the observation that the science of Climate Change is accepted worldwide and, now we need to find the political will to act.

The 34 recommendations can be read at the IJC website, [ijc.org](http://ijc.org) and comments from the public will be accepted until November 30, 2011. The final report will be published in 2012.



Launched by the League of Women Voters Education Fund (LWVEF) in October of 2006, VOTE411.org is a "one-stop-shop" for election related information. It provides nonpartisan information to the public with both general and state-specific information. A link to VOTE411.org is on our website's homepage.

## On Membership

Chris Weber, Chair

It is said that people can be divided into three groups: those who make things happen, those who watch things happen, and those who wonder, “What Happened?” What attracted me to League over 40 years (!) ago was that Leaguers made things happen, with wisdom from observing things that happened and then analyzing their causes. I also liked that LWV was not a single issue organization; members determined what was to be their issues of study and action. All the members were *so engaged* in determining public policy from grassroots efforts. That’s what the League of Women Voters is in essence. Doesn’t it still excite you? It is one of our gifts, a privilege of citizenship. Let’s not keep this to ourselves. I am sure each member of LWV Milwaukee County knows several people who would be excited by League’s citizen action. They need to be asked, invited to our events, to be told more than once of the benefits to our community and to the political growth of our members. It is up to each of us to grow our League.

### Fall Membership Orientation

Sunday, November 13

3 PM

Barbara Overstreet’s Home

620 N Regent Rd.

Fox Point, WI 53217

414-352-6317

Are you new to League of Women Voters, considering joining, or just need refreshing on how League operates? You are invited to attend our fall orientation at Barbara Overstreet’s home. Long-time Leaguers and recent joiners will be there to discuss their League experiences and reasons for their commitment to “making democracy happen.” Refreshments will be served. Anyone who is interested in League is invited to attend.

RSVP to Beverly Katter at 414-277-9158.



## New Citizen/New Voter

Sharon Munson, Director

There were fifteen people at the SRD training on Oct. 15 at the East Library. These recertified SRDs can now help us register the naturalized citizens that live in the City of Milwaukee. This is done at the Federal Courthouse each month. The committee is also finalizing the material that will be in the new League pamphlet. This will be sent to a printer and made ready for distribution. We were told that this pamphlet will serve as a format for all other Leagues in the State of Wisconsin.

## WINTER SOCIAL

Joanne Barndt and Mary Goode will be our hosts.

Mark your calendar, invite your friends and join the festivities  
with Leaguers.

Sunday, December 4th, 4 to 6 p.m.

St. John's On the Lake

1800 N. Prospect Avenue, Milwaukee 53202

Joanne's phone: 414-962-5634

Guest parking on the south side of the South Tower.

We will socialize and celebrate our recent accomplishments with  
League friends and a table full of holiday goodies and spirits.

Join the fun!

Please bring an appetizer or dessert to share.



**Let's Go Green**

Would you like to help us save some trees and postage costs too? Then opt in to receive your copy of *The Voter* electronically. You'll be able to either read it online or print it out at home in color or in black and white.

If you choose this option, send an email to [league@lwvmilwaukee.org](mailto:league@lwvmilwaukee.org) with "newsletter option" in the subject field. Then when each edition is ready you will receive an email from us with a link to *The Voter* on our website. No more waiting for the mailman and you'll be able to link directly to the other sites mentioned in the newsletter.

Remember, this is just an option; we will continue to publish our print version as usual, but we hope that over time more and more members will make the switch.

Thanks from the Board for considering this option.

**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: <http://lwvmilwaukee.org>

Email Address: [league@milwaukee.org](mailto: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. 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](mailto:league@milwaukee.org). Thank you!

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