

IN LEAGUE

*The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages informed, **diverse**, and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.*

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF BELOIT

JUNE 2017

THE LWV IS A VOLUNTEER ORGANIZATION THAT DOES A PROFESSIONAL JOB

Up-coming Events:

Summer Porch Discussion #1

at the home of Judy Robson, 2411 East Ridge Road

Wednesday, June 28

1:30pm

Special Guest will be Claire Santas,

Badger Girls State representative from Beloit Memorial High School

Beloit LWV Leadership Team / Board Meeting

Members are always invited.

Tuesday, July 11

4:45 pm

Beloit Public Library

Library Conference Room

Future Porch Discussions this summer:

Equal Opportunity Commission & NAACP Update

on Wednesday, July 19, 1:30pm at Barb Porter's

and

Water Issues & the Tar Sands Pipeline

on Thursday, August 24, 4:00pm - Nature at the Confluence

BELOIT LWV BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Susan Adams, Bette Carr, Stephanie Dobson, Deb Fallon, Effie Garrett,

Gayle Hotchkiss, Alice Lamont, Beatrice McKenzie, Joyce Metter,

Dalynda Owens, Joyce Schoenfield, Dorothy Stroud

School District Superintendent is Guest Speaker

We usually provide the minutes of an Annual Meeting as part of the packet for the next year's Annual Meeting. This year, however, LWV members at the meeting suggested that we invite Mr. Bonds to return as a speaker in the fall. Members also urged fellow Leaguers to support the efforts that the school district Ad-Hoc Achievement Gap Committee is working to achieve. This summary of the speaker's comments will help us follow through in reviewing this issue in the September.

The speaker for our April 29 Annual Meeting was Anthony Bonds, Assistant Superintendent of the Beloit Public Schools. After introducing himself, he started his power-point sharing district/state statistics, defining the achievement gap, explaining what Beloit is doing, and involving the community. His first two slides highlighted what the most important goal of the district is - getting young kindergarten students to high school graduation.

An ad-hoc committee has been formed to examine and recommend strategies to close the achievement gap, the difference in achieving in one group compared to another. A few noteworthy statistics are the following:

- 72% of the students are economically disadvantaged;
- 32% of the students are Hispanic;
- 21.5% are Black; 38% are White; and
- English Language Learners are 15% of the school population.

The tested reading levels for all students are below their white state peers. Since all of our juniors now take the ACT, our scores are also below the state's scores.

The Ad-hoc Achievement Gap Committee has 36 members from the school system and community which will examine practices, look at the curriculum, and resolve issues.

The four pillars of the committee are

1. academic achievement,
2. parent/family and community,
3. leadership and instructional capacity, and
4. learning.

The district wants to increase student performance specifically in literacy and math, but also in all subject areas while closing the achievement and opportunity gaps.

The ad-hoc committee is set to issue its first report sometime in September 2017. Principals will be speaking with the committee to share their stories after which the entire group will be divided into the four strands which are incorporated throughout the pillars.

The four strands are high/increased expectations, use of data for continuous improvement, equity/closing the achievement and opportunity gap, and collaboration and supports.

The talk was followed by a brief question and answer period. Mr. Bonds encouraged all of us to support staff members and let them know how we feel.



League of Women Voters of Beloit

The League of Women Voters of Beloit subscribes to the belief that diverse perspectives and inclusiveness are important and necessary for responsible and representative decision making. The Beloit LWV affirms this belief in diversity and pluralism through its values and practices.

The Beloit LWV is, therefore, committed to reflecting the diversity of Americans in its membership, board, and programs, which means that there shall be no barriers to participation in any activity of the Beloit LWV on the basis of race, national origin, creed, age, gender, sexual orientation, economic status, political activity or disability.

In This Issue:

Calendar of Events
School Dis't Speaker
Porch Discussion
Susan's Notes
Award
Member Action
Pipeline / Join League
Watershed Game
Sunshine
Observer Corps
Yard Sale

Check out our
Beloit League of Women Voters web site:
www.beloit.wi.lwvnet.org

Join us! Bring a Guest!
for the Beloit League's
Summer Porch Discussions

Porch Discussion #1 will be
at the home of Judy Robson
2411 East Ridge Road

Wednesday, June 28
1:30pm

Special Guest will be **Claire Santas**,
Badger Girls State representative from Beloit Memorial High School
We will also discuss voting rights



Future Porch Discussions will be on July 19 and August 24
for questions, email bclwv2010@gmail.com

Notes from the LWVWI Annual Meeting – June 2017

The Wisconsin State Convention was held recently in Green Bay. Five Leaguers from Beloit (Bette Carr, Deb and Mike Fallon, Effie Garrett, and Susan Adams) attended with about 115 registrants overall. We're grateful that Susan Adams has provided notes that describe her impressions of the event. Here are notes from a couple of the sessions she attended:

One important thing I came away with was - we are changing the nomenclature from "REDISTRICTING" to "FAIR VOTING MAPS." This sure makes the process clearer, and I was pleased to hear that one of the leagues in the far north had had our very own Tim Cullen speak about the process.

I found it difficult to take notes from Friday night's speaker, a professor of Democracy and Justice from UW-Green Bay, [Harvey J. Kaye](#), but he was interesting:

We need to remember that we Americans are radicals at heart. To transcend the crisis we face, we need to embrace our radical history. Essentially he said that our whole country is founded on ideas that were very radical - that people are equal and that we are entitled to the pursuit of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

We need to recall this fact more often and when others come in and try to rewrite history, we need to set them straight. For example, Reagan called up a nostalgic past, a past where there were no troubles, using the words "Make America Great Again." Yet, the past was NOT devoid of troubles for most of us. He just chose to ignore the problems. He used democratic heroes, hijacked the words and recrafted it all. Kaye said this is what Trump is doing today and that we need to be vigilant and not let leaders rewrite history and reframe our past.

He brought up the demonstrations and unrest in the 60's - in which the corporations stated that we had an "excess of democracy." He questioned how anyone could have an "excess of democracy." Recent radical movements were the Occupy Wall Street and the pipeline protests. Don't forget that such protests are part of our radical make-up and don't forget we are radicals at heart. Be vigilant!



Saturday morning [Erica Nelson](#) spoke about the connection between race and poverty. She is the director of the [Race to Equity Project](#) at the Wisconsin Council on Children and Families, an initiative to dramatically reduce racial disparities. She gave us many disturbing statistics of how race and poverty are linked, with graphs from the Anna E. Casey Foundation depicting Wisconsin as worst in the nation in basically everything. They are concentrating on Dane County, but hope to then help the rest of the state. She gave some statistics for Dane County:

- 44% of children in poverty are African American
- 41% are Native American
- 33% are Latino
- 10% are white

She said race matters, place matters, class matters, policy matters, and culture matters. Hence they are working on three policies:

- enhancing employment and earnings,
- supporting working parents, and
- assuring success in school.

The Casey Foundation just did another study and we'll see if Dane County has made any progress in ten years. She stated there is a business case for equity as well. "A community is not resilient if it is not equitable," she quoted Angela Glover Blackwell.

The Beloit LWV continues to be an award-winning League. At the recent Wisconsin LWV Annual Meeting our League was awarded the First Place Award for Membership and Leadership achievements (MLD Award).

This is not the first time the Beloit League has been honored. We earned the very first (and only) MLD award in 2013. Then in 2014, Bette Carr was awarded the Meg McLane Award for Advocacy of Human Rights. In 2015 Beloit achieved the Second Place MLD AWARD.



In recognition of exceptional commitment
to strengthening and developing diverse League leadership
through implementation of time-tested, best organizational practices that
Make Democracy Work® in Wisconsin,

We hereby present the

1st Place

Membership and Leadership Development Award

on this 10th day of June, 2017 to the

**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
OF BELOIT**

Signed,

Debra Cronmiller, President
League of Women Voters of Wisconsin

Louise Petering, Director
LWV-WI, Coordinator, MLD Wisconsin

Do you sometimes get email like this from the LWV of Wisconsin?



ACTION ALERT - CALL YOUR ASSEMBLY REP THIS MORNING!

Or like this, from the national League?



TAKE ACTION

As a Beloit LWV member you are also on the state and national mailing lists. These 'ACTION ALERTS' tell you how to do something very important for the League as well as for your community and nation. You are usually asked to make a phone call or send an email to a specific person or group asking them to respond for or against pending legislation. The legislation is always related to a LWV study or position.

When you join other Leaguers in taking a few minutes to send a quick email, you are part of a very effective power group. It's an important way you can personally **make a difference**.

There's a bit of a catch, though. Only specific board members are authorized to 'speak' in the name of the League. So when you follow through with your contact, you should speak 'for yourself' without mentioning the LWV.

The next time you receive one of the League's 'ACTION ALERTS' send a quick note or phone call on its way. **It will really make you feel good**.

Check out the next page. You will find the names of Beloit's legislators and how to reach them. If you print an extra copy of that page, it will be even easier and more effective for you to 'take action'.

Beloit's legislators in state and national government

We hope this information will make it easier for you to contact your senators and representatives. Once they receive an email from you, many of them will add your address to their legislative update list.

REPRESENTATIVES

Amy Loudenbeck (R)

District 31 - Clinton and eastern Beloit
email: Rep.Loudenbeck@legis.wis.gov

Telephone: (608) 266-9967

Office: Room 304 East
State Capitol
PO Box 8952
Madison, WI 53708

Mark Spreitzer (D)

Minority Caucus Chair

District 45 - Most of Beloit
email: Rep.Spreitzer@legis.wis.gov

Telephone: (608) 266-1192

Office: Room 113 North
State Capitol
PO Box 8953
Madison, WI 53708

SENATORS

Stephen Nass (R)

District 11 - Clinton and eastern Beloit
email: Sen.Nass@legis.wis.gov

Telephone:(608) 266-2635

Office: Room 10 South
State Capitol
Madison, WI 53707-7882

Janis Ringhand (D)

District 15 - Most of Beloit
email: Sen.Ringhand@legis.wis.gov

Telephone: (608) 266-2253

Office: Room 3 South
State Capitol
Madison, WI 53707-7882

US Representative for Wisconsin's 2nd Congressional District

Mark Pocan (D)

313 Cannon House Office Building
Washington DC 20515
Telephone: 202-225-2906
email: <https://pocan.house.gov>

Beloit Satellite Office

9:30-11:30 am - 2nd Thursday of the Month
100 State Street, 3rd floor - Beloit, WI 53511
Telephone: (608) 365-8001

Wisconsin's Senators in the United States Congress

Ron Johnson (R)

2 Russel Courtyard
Washington DC 20510
Telephone: (202) 224-5323

Tammy Baldwin (D)

1 Russel Courtyard
Washington DC 20510
Telephone: 202-224-5653

Oil and Water Don't Mix:

Meet Us at the Confluence

306 Dickop, South Beloit, 4:00 pm, Thursday, August 24

Our third summer porch discussion will give Leaguers and guests a chance to visit the Learning Center at the Confluence (Where Turtle Creek and Rock River meet).

Three speakers will present a variety of interesting topics:

- A representative from **Nature at the Confluence** will describe their project,
- LWV leaders will provide a brief update on **voter education** issues,
and most important of all,
- LWV member, **Connie Matusiak**, who is also a member of Wisconsin Safe Energy Alliance will share information about a **tar sands pipeline proposal** for Wisconsin. Connie has provided a few tidbits of background information to help us put the issue in context:

Tars Sands Pipeline Awareness

Since 1968, Enbridge, a Canadian oil pipeline company has added pipelines with increasing capacity of dangerous petroleum products through the center of Wisconsin.

We hear in the news about the Keystone pipeline, but right here in Wisconsin, a new and larger tar sands pipeline is being proposed. Tar sands, a heavy oil sludge mined in Alberta, needs toxic liquids added to be able to flow through the pipelines.

Oil spills occur. There is no satisfactory way to clean up a tar sands spill. The pipeline would travel under or near many of our lakes and rivers putting the Wisconsin environment and tourism in danger.

You will want to contact your elected officials and ask why they are putting Wisconsin's pristine waters at risk, and why the profits of a Canadian company are more important to them than our precious, irreplaceable resources and the tourism jobs of thousands.

Are YOU reading this newsletter as a 'guest'?

Joining the League of Women Voters is easy!

* * * * *

Simply print out this page and cut off this form.

Write your check to the League of Women Voters of Beloit. **Dues are \$65.**

Mail it to the Beloit LWV Treasurer: Alice Lamont

2429 Lathers Road (Phone: 365-4747)
Beloit, WI 53511

* * * * *

_____	_____	_____
<i>name</i>	<i>phone</i>	<i>date</i>
_____	_____	_____
<i>street</i>	<i>city/state</i>	<i>zip</i>
_____	_____	_____
<i>e-mail</i>	<i>signature</i>	

Application for LWV Dues Scholarship: I hereby request consideration for a LWV Dues Scholarship in the amount of \$_____ for one year's membership. I understand that it is my responsibility to pay at least 20% (\$13.00) of the annual dues. **signature**_____

The Watershed Game – Training the Trainer Workshop

Learn to use the new Classroom Version for youth and the Stream, Lake, and River Versions for local leaders.

July 20 & 21, 2017 *Participants select one day to attend
9:30 – 5:00 pm
North Suburban Library, 6340 N 2nd St, Loves Park, IL 61111

Who should attend?

For League of Women Voter members and Rotary Club members from Illinois, Iowa and Wisconsin, representatives of land trusts, Extension and Sea Grant staff, and teachers and other informal science educators from the surrounding area.

About the Watershed Game - Expect an interactive experience

The Watershed Game is an interactive tool that helps individuals understand the connection between land use and water quality.

Participants

- learn how a variety of land uses impact water and natural resources
- increase their knowledge of best management practices (BMPs)
- learn how their choices can prevent adverse impacts
- apply plans, practices, and policies that help them achieve a water quality goal for a stream, lake, or river

The Watershed Game is available in four versions. The Stream, Lake, and River Versions for Local Leaders are used with elected and appointed officials, community leaders, business leaders, and citizens. A Classroom Version for use with middle to high school youth audiences.

The Watershed Game is a curriculum and resource developed and published by the University of Minnesota Sea Grant Program and University of Minnesota Extension.

For more information about this training, contact: Bonnie Cox Phone: 815-777-9282 | 815-238-1725
Email: bonniekaycox@gmail.com

\$20 per person*Register today at z.umn.edu/lovespark



“SUNSHINE” in the LWV

As President Lincoln reminded the nation in his Gettysburg Address, ours is a government “of the people, by the people, for the people.” Government exists for our benefit and is accountable to us, its citizens.

The idea that everyday people have the right to know what actions their government is taking is called “SUNSHINE”. Openness in government, or “Sunshine” or refers to two distinct areas: access to public records and access to public meetings.

Leagues throughout the nation are guided by a set of statements called LWV principles. One of the League’s principles advocates a sunshine provision that “government bodies protect the citizen’s right to know by giving adequate notice of proposed actions, holding open meetings and making public records accessible.”

Observer Corps programs are one way for Leagues to ensure that “sunshine” or government transparency procedures are followed in their communities. The Beloit LWV Board has been working the last couple of years to reactivate our Observer Corps.

What is the Observer Corps?

It’s when a League member/observer attends a governmental meeting, such as city council or school board, (or even a parks committee), just to observe what the governmental body is doing. Observers wear a pin, sticker, or button that identifies them as a League member, but they do not participate in the meeting in any way. The observer notes what topics are discussed, what action is taken, and how the meetings are conducted. Then the League member fills out a form which is turned over to the board.

The questions below aren’t necessarily included on the reporting form, but help an observer know what to look for.

- Are all the members of the board, commission, or agency present at the meeting?
- Is appropriate staff present?
- Are members of the media present? Are members of the public present?
- How is the meeting being conducted?
- Was the meeting announced in advance?
- Was the agenda available in advance of the meeting? Is the agenda being followed?
- Are the proceedings being conducted in a professional manner?
- Are items being discussed— or do decisions appear to be “cut and dried”?
- Is there adequate opportunity for public input? What is the overall tone or atmosphere?
- Where is the meeting being conducted? Is the venue accessible?
- Can the space accommodate members of the public? Can the proceedings be heard?
- What issues are being discussed?
- Did the group approve some action? If so, does it relate to any of the League’s priorities or positions?

Serving as an observer is something that anyone can do. Through attending meetings to gather information, observers encourage better, more transparent government and help keep our community healthy, vibrant and strong.

See next page for the LWV of Beloit Observer Corp Policy & Procedures

LWV of Beloit Observer Corp Policy & Procedures

League wants to be a valuable resource to elected officials and to support them on issues aligned with League positions. To do that, the Observer Corp is intended stay abreast of issues by maintaining a presence at as many government meetings as possible. Our role is to build trust and respect between LWV by being courteous and demonstrating that LWV is there to learn, not to judge.

Benefits:

- Government officials perform more responsibly.
- Decisions made are more balanced and reflective of the electorate.
- Communication between League and local government officials and agencies is strengthened.
- League members see how the organizations mission is being fulfilled.
- Individuals are provided a specific way to get involved with League.
- Attendance at meetings helps League identify target community issues, concerns, or trends.
- League will be more visible.

Requirements:

- Knowledge, understanding, and adherence to Policy and Procedures
- Participation in an orientation to review Open Meetings/Open Records law, League's non-partisan policy, observer corps policy, and report form
- Adoption of one governmental body or committee and attendance at all meetings
- Attempt to find a substitute if unable to attend a meeting

Procedures:

- Select a committee or governmental body, find out the name of the chairman, members, and time and place of meeting
- Contact chairman/clerk of the governmental body, introduce yourself, and arrange to receive an agenda and materials packet previous to each meeting
- Using available resources, become acquainted with how the committee/governmental body functions. i.e. What are their supervisory and/or financial responsibilities? What rules or procedures guide the group, the committees, and/or departments they oversee? What are the rules for public participation for this group?
- Watch and learn as issues come and go during the year. Be alert to Open Meetings compliance.
- Attend meetings wearing a LWV button. At the first meeting attended, introduce yourself and your purpose.
- After each meeting complete an Observer Corp Report Form and send it to the Action Chairman.
- When issues important to League arise, work with the LWV Board to take action on behalf of a League position.
- **No oral statements should be made nor written statements given to the committee or governmental body as an observer.**

See previous page for additional information about League's Observer Corps



Does the lovely weather give you ambition to clean up your living space? Are you eager to get rid of accumulated **STUFF**?

You can start your donation corner **NOW**.



Save all those attractive but unneeded items for League's participation in the areawide yard sale next May.

We will need lots of variety, so ask your friends and neighbors to donate their unneeded items.