



September 2020



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By Jeanne Roberts, President

September is typically the time of year that League of Women Voters of Appleton begins its work after a summer hiatus. This year has been different due to several reasons.

We have had to rethink how we do all of our work, and that has required a huge effort on our part. We have developed creative ways to conduct the candidate forums and voter registration/absentee ballot efforts. We have also developed virtual ways to conduct League business and monthly programs. We have continued collaborating with other nonpartisan groups to fulfill our mission to Empower Voters and Defend Democracy. And we are doing it through a Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI) lens.

We have an important election coming up and we need your help. Please review the articles written by our board members describing what they have worked on and continue working on.

All other Leagues around the country are dealing with the same issues related to Covid-19 as we are. This has been a mixed blessing. It has made much of our work more difficult, but it has also allowed us access to educational programs and discussion groups that have not been available in the past. The LWV of Wisconsin will have a page on their website that will list some of the programs being offered around the state. I encourage you to look at that website as well as the LWV-US website for educational opportunities.

Our organization has grown over the last couple of years, and we would love to have as many members as possible become more involved with the good work that we are doing. Cindy Fallona is our Membership Director, and can help you to find areas of interest to you. You can also contact any of our board members or use our email address, league.appleton@yahoo.com

, or our phone number, 920-738-7766, if you have questions or ideas to make our local League even more dynamic! And finally, if you have not done it yet, go to our website, lwvappleton.org, to view the fabulous 19th Amendment Virtual Celebration that was the labor of love of the entire 19th Amendment Centennial Committee.

Thanks to all of you for everything you do!

‘Nevertheless, We Progress’ personifies suffrage spirit

By Marti Hemwall & Linda Bjella, Co-Chairs

This year, Women’s Equality Day was unique as we adjusted to the pandemic. The fact that the Suffrage Movement 100 years ago also faced challenges from the influenza pandemic was not lost on us! Our original plans for an exciting in-person event were postponed until 2021, so Women’s Equality Day 2020 became a fun educational and celebratory video. We unveiled the video, **Nevertheless, We Progress!** on August 26, 2020, the 100th anniversary of when the 19th Amendment became law.

Our video included music (Janet Planet, Hillary Reynolds, Erica Hamilton, and Grammy award nominee jazz singer Karrin Allyson), readings selected from famous suffragists, inspiring quotes, interwoven with voting information. A highlight was the series of Why I Want to Vote from those representing the wide diversity of voters in our community.



League members Karen Nelson and Jeanne Roberts, in photo at right, step arm-in-arm into the role of historic suffragettes.

Our virtual event reached far greater numbers than we anticipated. So far, the video has reached more than 1,000 viewers with 550 people actually viewing part or all of our hour-long video. Even

more remarkable -- we had viewers in 9 states in addition to Wisconsin, including Minnesota, California, Mississippi, New Jersey, New York, Indiana, Alabama, Washington and Texas!



The League of Women Voters of Appleton is the lead partner in the 19th Amendment Coalition, a group of local women’s groups including American Association of University Women, the Northeast Wisconsin Alumnae Chapter of the Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Midday Women’s Alliance and the Women’s Fund for the Fox Valley Region. We are working to raise awareness of women’s voices often lost in suffrage history and to encourage women to vote. Please view all of our ongoing activities, including a Speakers Bureau (we have been asked to present virtually in numerous states), educational toolkits, a traveling exhibit and access to numerous online, video and other resources. www.hervoic ehervoteourvictory.com

Fight for Fair Maps: A long, hard road lies ahead

By Linda Bjella, Legislative Vice President

Here's the good news: 54 of Wisconsin's 72 counties have weighed in on the issue of non-partisan redistricting, and there are 9 more counties with referendums on the ballot in November. Average support for fair maps across the state has been 72%. Clearly, people in Wisconsin do not like gerrymandering. In a recent Marquette University poll, **83% of Democrats, 76% of Independents, and 63% of Republicans favor fair legislative maps.**

The bad news is that all this grassroots support is advisory only. Unlike some other states, Wisconsin's Constitution doesn't allow for binding resolutions generated by citizens. In order to stop gerrymandering in Wisconsin – the most extreme case of partisan gerrymandering in the country – our legislators have to be persuaded to end it. Prying loose a party in power is not going to be easy and it's not going to be quick.

I recently had the opportunity to attend (virtually, of course) a program on fair maps with Jay Heck, the executive director of Common Cause in Wisconsin for the past 22 years. Here's what he predicts will happen with redistricting after the census.

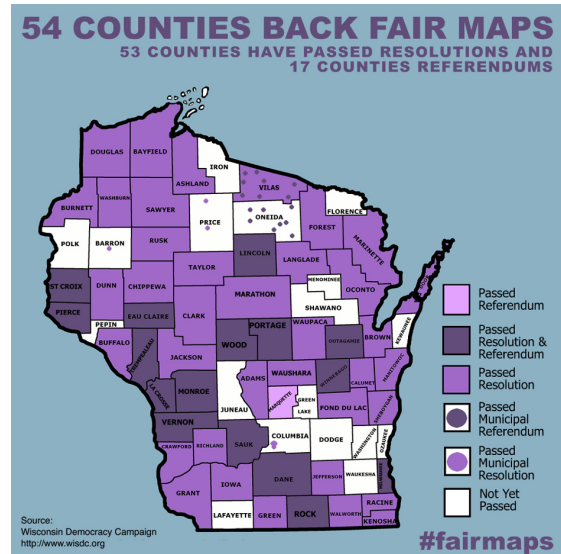
Republicans will retain control of the legislature after the November election. Current legislative maps guarantee this will happen. According to the Wisconsin Constitution, every 10 years after the census, the legislature "shall apportion and district anew the members of the senate and assembly, according to the number of inhabitants." Notice it doesn't say the legislature "shall draw the legislative districts."

Packed and Cracked

This certainly isn't what was done in 2011 with the current maps. A highly secretive team headed by a political operative from Oklahoma began meeting behind locked doors in an office building across from the state capitol. Using partisan voting data and computer algorithms, the previous legislative districts were "cracked" and "packed". Democratic voters were packed into small districts (like the 57th) and others were cracked and sprinkled into majority Republican districts (like the 55th and 56th). The result? No matter how many people vote in an election, Republicans are mathematically guaranteed at least a 59% majority in the legislature. The 2018 election proved the point: 54% of the voters favored Democrats, but won only 36% of the legislative seats. Not a single Republican lost, and 38 of races were uncontested.

It's important to mention that when Democrats had control of the legislature prior to the 2010 election, they had the opportunity to put non-partisan redistricting in place and didn't do it. Also worthy of note is that other states such as Maryland have been severely gerrymandered by Democratic politicians.

Heck predicts that the Wisconsin legislature will draw similar partisan maps in 2021. Governor Evers will veto them, and without a 2/3 majority to override the veto, the matter would ultimately be resolved by the Wisconsin Supreme Court, which has a 4-3 conservative majority. The process will end there because the U.S. Supreme Court has ruled that partisan gerrymander cases will no longer be addressed by the federal courts.



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Member Engagement: Welcoming Opportunities

By Cindy Fallona, Membership Director

The League of Women Voters Appleton membership ranks continue to grow. It is evident that even a pandemic cannot dampen enthusiasm and passion for **Empowering Voters, Defending Democracy!** We now stand at 142 strong with the addition of our newest member, Cheri Bricco from Appleton.

It is with deep regret that I have to notify everyone of the August death of Jeanette Bayer of Appleton. The League has sent condolences to her family.

With our 2020-2021 programs set to begin virtually in September, this presents us with a great opportunity to introduce potential new members to the Appleton League. Opportunities for all members to engage in this important political year include helping to register new voters, displaying "Vote from Home" yard signs, assisting with virtual Candidate Forums, and becoming part of the Observer Corps.

If you or someone you know wants to learn more about these League activities, please contact me and I will immediately follow up with you on how to get connected: **Cindy Fallona, Membership Director; email cbfallona@hotmail.com or phone 920-606-3475**

Help Promote Virtual Speakers Bureau to the Community

By Gayle Hardt

As we all adjust to differences in our daily lives due to COVID-19, the 19th Amendment Speaker's Bureau has made adjustments too. We know that community groups and organizations have had to change how they meet, and we want to accommodate meeting needs. As a result, our speaker's bureau has gone virtual!

We would welcome the opportunity for volunteers from our key partner organizations to speak about some of the more important, and sometimes unknown, history of the women's suffrage movement. Our speakers will also provide voting information if appropriate.

The 19th Amendment Centennial Celebration Speaker's Bureau is available to local groups of any size or age. The length of the presentation is flexible and can be adjusted to meet the group's needs. We will work with an organization to present on Zoom or the platform preferred.

The Fox Valley 19th Amendment Centennial Celebration Coalition is a collaborative effort of women from women-run associations, organizations and clubs, all aligned in our desire to celebrate, educate and advocate women's rights. The Coalition represents the League of Women Voters of Appleton, Northeast Wisconsin Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Inc., Women's Fund for the Fox Valley Region, American Association of University Women-Appleton, Mid-Day Women's Alliance and more.

If interested in securing a speaker for an upcoming meeting, please visit our website at www.hervoicethevotourvictory.com/outreach

Fair Maps, continued from page 3

Another even more nefarious scenario is a scheme to circumvent the governor altogether, and pass the new legislative maps as a joint resolution which is not subject to a governor's veto. This was tried once before in 1960, and the Wisconsin Supreme Court ruled it was unconstitutional. Would the current Wisconsin Supreme Court abide by that decision? Remember that these justices are elected for 10-year terms, and may be influenced by strong public opposition to partisan gerrymandering. This is why grassroots activism is crucial. If you would like to get involved in this issue, please contact me and check out the Wisconsin Fair Maps Coalition online at <https://www.fairmapswi.com>

CELEBRATING 100 YEARS

2020-21 PROGRAMS • Virtual Gatherings

Mondays 5:15-6:30 p.m.

(Unless noted otherwise)

Come meet League members and learn about various topics of local importance!

Monday, Oct 19 – Hispanic Heritage Celebration

Monday, Nov 16 – Social Injustice in Housing

Saturday, Dec 12 – Holiday Gathering – Gerrymandering

Saturday, Jan 23 – Lively Issues (Day 1) – Understanding the Process and Bringing Issues to the Table *(Time TBD)*

Saturday, Jan 30 – Lively Issues (Day 2) – Discussion and Prioritizing the Issues *(Time TBD)*

Saturday, Feb 13 – Consensus *(Time TBD)*

Monday, Feb 15 – What’s Being Taught About US History in High School?

Monday, Mar 15 – Reproductive Health Care

Monday, Apr 19 – Climate Concerns

May – Annual Meeting *(Date and Time TBD)*



Text Outreach Volunteers Needed

LWVWI is partnering with Wisconsin Conservation Voices to reach out to voters with information about the voter registration process and the absentee voting process (learn more at my.lwv.org) via text messages using an app called Hustle. This opportunity is for volunteers who are familiar with these voting processes and are comfortable with using apps on cell phones.. This is a great opportunity to connect with voters from the safety of your home.

Hustle is a peer to peer platform. LWVWI supplies volunteers with a list of Text numbers. You can generate the text from a pc, smartphone or tablet device. If your text generates a question, you can respond directly with that person. LWVWI will provide training on how to use the app. Once you're trained, the volunteer schedule is very flexible.

If you'd like to volunteer for this opportunity, please go online to <https://my.lwv.org/wisconsin/employment-and-volunteer-opportunities-league>

NOTE: LWV Appleton is aligned with LWVUS and LWV Wisconsin through a portion of our membership dues, and through collaborative initiatives and programs. To learn more, go online to our website at lwvappleton.org

Climate Change Study: Educational Videos Coming

By Renee Gralewicz, Climate Change Study Group

I am always amazed at how many people accept challenges and stay enthusiastic as they work toward an end. For example, our Climate Change Study Group worked all summer to produce phenomenal educational videos which will be published and available soon. They are creating these because the chances of giving public presentations are limited right now. These videos will also support our efforts to come to a consensus on these climate change issues in 2021.

What will be available in early October will be videos explaining the urgency of issues regarding the environmental health of Appleton and surrounding areas. Stay tuned to our website for announcements of when these resources will be available.

- **Vulnerable Populations** discusses the ecological and cultural landscapes and how geography affects the economic landscape which in turn impacts safe housing and environmental health.

- **Vulnerable Populations: Affordable Housing** reflects on the well-known fact that low-income individuals and families of communities of color have traditionally been left out of access to decent affordable housing. This intersects in dangerous ways regarding climate change events.

- **Agriculture, Climate Change and Water Quality: Challenges and Solutions** informs on current farmer needs and the costs of meeting safe water quality standards in the face of severe climate events.

- **Pollution of the Winnebago Water System by Blue Green Algae** is a frank exploration into the dangers of our Fox Valley drinking water systems.

- **Water Quality Education Effort** is a great overview of the threats to our Fox Valley watershed.

Contact Jill Mitchler at jemitchler@gmail.com if you want to join the research fun. The study group will be working on these issues over the next few months.

Vote from Home: League Offers Yard Signs

LWV Appleton is encouraging members to display yards signs encouraging people to “Vote from Home” for the 2020 November election. The signs are free and will be delivered to your home. Signs should be displayed between now and Oct 14. Along with your sign, you will get a small “An informed voter is a powerful voter” car magnet and a “Vote 411” pen.

Additionally, we have a limited number of “Vote Tuesday” yard signs that would be displayed between Wednesday, Oct 28 and Tuesday, Nov 3. Not everyone who requests one will receive one.

Signs are targeted to be delivered by September 16. Please use the format below to email [Brian Post](mailto:brian@lwv.org) with your address, indicate which sign(s) you are interest, and in which of the following general areas you reside:

I want a “Vote From Home” sign, car magnet & pen; I would like a “Vote Tuesday” sign

My address is: _____

I live in this general area:

Area 1: North Appleton/Grand Chute Area 2: South Appleton Area 3: West Appleton

Area 4: East/Central Appleton Area 5: Neenah/Menasha

Area 6: Kimberly, Kaukauna, Little Chute, Town of Harrison



LWV Observer Corps: Watchdogs of Democracy

By Linda Bjella

The League's Observer Corps volunteers are essential to the way our organization functions in the local community. League observers typically sign on to actively follow local governmental bodies by attending meetings and reporting back to the League board if an issue of concern to the League is being addressed. Observers don't speak at meetings, but do make their presence known to our elected officials and let them know that we are holding them accountable for what and how decisions are being made.

Typically, the Appleton League has had observers at the Appleton Common Council, the Outagamie County Board, and the Appleton Area Board of Education meetings. At this time, all these meetings are being conducted virtually, so it's never been easier to be a League observer.

If you're interested in participating in the Observer Corps, now is the time to get involved. Please indicate your area of interest. You'll be amazed at how fascinating it is, and how much you'll learn about local government.

The Appleton Common Council meetings are held the first and third Wednesdays at 7:00 p.m. live streamed on the Appleton City Hall Facebook page.

The Outagamie County Board of Supervisors meets the second and fourth Tuesdays at 7:00 p.m. virtually on the GoToMeeting platform.

The Appleton Area Board of Education meetings are held the second and fourth Mondays at 6:00 p.m. live streamed on the district's YouTube channel.

Please contact Linda Bjella at lindabjella@gmail.com if you have further questions.

Candidate Forums: LWV Invites Citizen Questions

The Appleton League of Women Voters will host a virtual Candidate Forum for Wisconsin Assembly District 3 on Wednesday, September 16 from 6:30-7:30 p.m. Candidates featured in the forum will be incumbent Ron Tusler (R) and challenger Emily Voight (D).

While the forum will be held online due to COVID-19 restrictions, listeners can have access to the candidates by submitting written questions to be posed to the candidates. Questions must be submitted to the League by 6:30 p.m. on Tuesday, Sept. 15. Questions may be emailed to league.appleton@yahoo.com; write "Candidate Forum Question" in the subject line.

The League reserves the right to screen questions to avoid duplication and inappropriate rhetoric. Questions are to address issues appropriate to that particular public office, not personalities.

The League will hold this program as a virtual meeting on the Zoom platform. Registration is required for security purposes and information can be found on the League's Facebook page, *League of Women Voters of Appleton*, or the League's website, www.lwvappleton.org. The forum will be recorded and available after the event on the League website.

The Appleton League also will conduct candidate forums for the following Assembly districts; watch for later forum information on Facebook and the League website.

Wisconsin Assembly District 56: Dave Murphy (R), incumbent, and Diana Lawrence (D); **Thursday, September 24;** 6:30-7:30 p.m. Submit questions by 6:30 p.m. on Wednesday, September 23 to league.appleton@yahoo.com

Wisconsin Assembly District 57: Eric Beach (R), and Lee Snodgrass (D); **Tuesday, September 29,** 6:30-7:30 p.m. Submit questions by 6:30 p.m. on Monday, September 28 to league.appleton@yahoo.com

The Informed Voter

LWVUS: Focused Effort to Get Out the Vote

National Voter Registration Day, less than two weeks away on September 22, is a national event that strengthens our democracy by ensuring every eligible voter is registered and ready to cast a ballot—and this year it underscores an extraordinary sense of urgency.

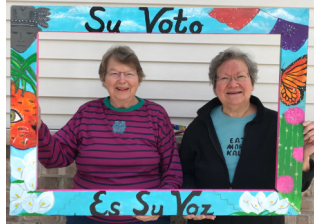
During this pivotal election year, our right to vote is continuously being challenged—in cynical, discriminatory, and even illegal ways. With massive voter roll purges in states like Ohio and Georgia, the undermining of the U.S. Postal Service and mail-in ballot efforts in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, the spreading of disinformation and sowing distrust in our election, it's clear we have our work cut out for us.



Please help combat voter suppression by learning how to help register new voters. Check out vote411.com online for information, or contact LWV Appleton Membership Director Cindy Fallona to be connected with local Voter Services volunteers.

NOTE: LWV Appleton is aligned with LWVUS and LWV Wisconsin through a portion of our membership dues, and through collaborative initiatives and programs. To learn more, go online to our website at lwvappleton.org

LWV Appleton Members At Work



Miriam Douglass, left, and Ligia Rivera are working hard to mobilize the Latino vote. Both also are on the Climate Change Study Group.



The Voter Services Team led by Jacqueline Klimaszewski and Brian Post has amassed magnetic car signs, buttons and pens to remind new voters to register online.

Trunk Up: LWV in Action in Our Community



LWV-Appleton was in action at the recent African Heritage Inc. "Trunk Up and Go Back to School Family Celebration". At the drive-through event, 3 volunteers asked 3 questions: "Are you registered to vote? Do you have a plan? Have you completed the Census 2020?" Members in action, L-R, are Gayle Hardt, Linda Bjella and Karen Nelson.