



JANUARY 2021



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By Jeanne Roberts, President

Welcome to the first newsletter of 2021. As this year begins, we are facing the largest constitutional crisis in my lifetime. With the president inciting an insurrection and members of Congress refusing to accept the will of the people and actively pursuing means to overthrow the election, pro-democracy organizations such as the League of Women Voters are more important than ever. The League's nonpartisan stance and positions based on facts and research make it essential to maintaining Democracy in these partisan times.

We will be holding our Lively Issues meeting on January 23 to discuss what issues to consider for study and for programming for the 2021/22 League year. Please join us via Zoom to be a part of this important discussion.

Let our membership director, Cindy Fallona, know where you would like to help with League work.

We will continue with our voter registration efforts and with nonpartisan candidate forums for the Spring elections. Let Jacqui Klimaszeswki know if you would like to help with those efforts.

We need help with planning and organizing our programs for the next year. Let Renee Gralewicz know if you would like to help with that.

We especially need help in the technology and communications area since we have had to do so much of our work online. Let Dave Strange or Barbara Kelly know if you can help with that.

After Lively Issues, we are likely to have a new study that needs a committee. Let Renee Gralewicz or me know if you are interested in that.

Thank you for all that you do whether it is through financial support or volunteer support. It is through you that we will fulfill our mission to Empower Voters and Defend Democracy.

Absentee Ballots: Make Voting A 2021 Resolution

**By Brian Post,
Director of Voter Registration**

Do you remember how easy and convenient it was to vote absentee in the November election? With the COVID-19 pandemic still impacting our lives - including how we participate in elections - let's make it our New Year's Resolution to vote in every election in 2021. And just as we voted absentee in record numbers in 2020, we should strive to do the same in 2021.

One quick and easy way to get you on track to accomplish this resolution is by requesting all of your absentee ballots for 2021. Visit myvote.wi.gov today to make sure you are ready to vote this year.

We have two elections in 2021: February 16 primary and April 6 general. The February 16 primary just became official on January 13, so if you already had requested your absentee ballot for April 6, you should now go back to request one for the February 16 primary also.

Encourage your friends to do the same, too. Share on social media that you are #VoteReady2021!

It's 2021, let's make voting absentee and participating in democracy fun.

Nonpartisan Status: What It Means in Partisan Times

**By Jeanne Roberts
President, LWV Appleton**

The League of Women Voters has a 100-year history of nonpartisan advocacy. What does this mean and how can we continue this in the current political environment? According to the Oxford Dictionary, nonpartisan means not biased or partisan, especially toward any particular political group.

The bylaws of the League of Women Voters of the United States stipulate that the League of Women Voters "shall not support or oppose any political party or candidate." That does not mean that the League or League members cannot or should not criticize elected officials, especially when they are doing things that are counter to the League's mission to empower voters and defend democracy.

The week following the insurrection at the Capitol building, the League of Women Voters called for the impeachment of the president of the United States. Virginia Case, CEO of the LWVUS, indicated that "As advocates who fight for a free and fair democracy, we have no choice but to call for the removal of Donald Trump by impeachment and disqualify him from ever holding federal office again." Some would question whether this was nonpartisan but a careful look at the quote reveals that the League is fighting for democracy more than they are against a president. The League's history of nonpartisan advocacy makes this statement even stronger than it would have been coming from a purely partisan organization.

Be proud of the nonpartisan advocacy that you do through the League of Women Voters and understand that empowering voters and defending democracy involves the confronting of anyone who would disempower our Democracy.

LWVUS Bylaws Elevate DEI Policy Status

By Shirley Strange
DEI Committee Chair

The Bylaws of The League of Women Voters of the United States were updated in June 2020 to include a policy on Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI). The policy is given the same status as the League's fundamental policy of nonpartisanship. The policy on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion is found in Article II, Sec 2.

ARTICLE I **Name**

The name of this organization shall be League of Women Voters of the United States, hereinafter referred to in these bylaws as LWVUS.

ARTICLE II **Purposes and Policies**

Sec. 1. Purposes. The purposes of the LWVUS are to promote political responsibility through informed and active participation in government and to act on selected governmental issues.

Sec. 2. Policies. The policies of the LWVUS are

- 1. Political Policy.** The League shall not support or oppose any political party or any candidate.
- 2. Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Policy.** The League is fully committed to ensure compliance - in principle and in practice - with LWVUS' Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Policy.

ARTICLE III

Membership: The full text of this can be seen in the link to the Bylaws of LWVUS, below.

The first three articles of all local and state League bylaws must be consistent with those of the LWVUS. League of Women Voters of Appleton will update the local bylaws to include the DEI Policy in keeping with the National League mandate. A membership vote is not necessary.

Full set of Bylaws of the LWVUS can be found here:

<https://www.lwv.org/league-management/bylaws/bylaws-and-certificate-incorporation>

See the National and Appleton League Policy on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion here:

<https://my.lwv.org/wisconsin/appleton/lwv-appleton-diversity>



The League of Women Voters of Appleton's Climate Change Preparedness and Resilience Study Committee enjoyed a moment of levity at their December meeting on Zoom. The group has been researching impacts of climate change in our area and devising draft position statements to be reviewed at a Consensus meeting on Saturday, February 13, and voted on by membership at the Annual Meeting in May.



Your Membership Connects You to LWV History

Compiled by Cindy Fallona
Membership Director

In 2020, we celebrated the 100th anniversary of the founding of the League of Women Voters in the US. Your membership in the League of Women Voters Appleton connects you to the League at the state and federal levels. Here are some of the interesting stories behind our League that help us understand the importance of the League and all that we do to empower voters and defend democracy.

1920-2020

We believe in the power of women to create a more perfect democracy. That's been our vision since 1920, when the League of Women Voters was founded by leaders of the suffrage movement. For 100 years, we have been a nonpartisan, activist, grassroots organization that believes voters should play a critical role in democracy.

1920

LWV Founded

The League of Women Voters was officially founded in Chicago, just six months before the 19th amendment was ratified and women won the vote. Formed by the suffragists of the National American Women Suffrage Association, the League began as “**a mighty political experiment**” designed to help 20 million women carry out their new responsibilities as voters.

1944-1945

UN Established & LWV Named NGO Observer

After WWII, the League carried out a nationwide public support campaign, at the request of President Franklin Roosevelt, to establish the United Nations and to ensure U.S. participation. Following the campaign, President Harry Truman invited the League to serve as a consultant to the U.S. delegation at the United Nations Charter Conference. One of the first organizations officially recognized by the UN as a non-governmental organization (NGO), the League **still maintains** official observer status.

1957

LWV Education Fund Established

As the League became more active in issue advocacy, the need arose for a separate organizational arm for activities like **voter registration** and information. The League of Women Voters Education Fund was established to encourage the active and informed participation of citizens in government and to increase understanding of major public policy issues.

1972

Major Campaign to Ratify ERA

In 1972, shortly after congressional passage of the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA), LWV voted officially to support “equal rights for all regardless of sex.” The League followed this vote with a nationwide pressure campaign that continued through the 1970s. That national campaign ended in 1982, but the **LWV continues to push** for ERA ratification today.

1976

Emmy Award for Presidential Debates

The League sponsored the **first** televised presidential debates since 1960, for which we received an Emmy award for Outstanding Achievement in Broadcast Journalism.

Member Spotlight: Meet Jim Bowman



What would you like Appleton League members to know about you?

My father was a door-to-door milkman, my mother a bookkeeper. The family lived in a blue-collar suburb of Kansas City in which very few were wealthy and very few poor. My high school graduating class also had that “flat” distribution of wealth. Of the 450 students in the class, I can identify only two who came from well-off families and none who were known to be poor. I believe that the absence of community differentiation by family income simplified my life during my K-12 years.

Tell us one or two important things that League has given you.

The League gives me a sense of hope for the future. In every community in which I have lived, the League was there prior to elections to help me compare candidates for office. Candidate forums helped me to understand those running for office and I appreciate the League for sponsoring those events.

Name one event in your life that helped make you the person you are today.

Army Officers Candidate School is one of the most challenging endeavors I have experienced. In that six-month school, the Army prepares you for war by placing you in difficult situations at a state-side location. Then when you feel overwhelmed in a combat role, you remember, “I put up with hell in OCS – I can handle this”.

The technique worked on me.

What is the most interesting piece of music you have ever heard?

Tchaikovsky’s Nutcracker Suite is not only interesting but masterful. Even separated from the ballet, the music is beautiful.

What is something you think everyone should do at least once in their lives?

“Do good work, hit a ball and bounce a baby”. The quote comes from Alistair Cooke, a British journalist who lived in and reported from the U.S. for many years. That sentence was Cooke’s recipe for the essentials of a good life and I agree.



January is LWV membership renewal month.

Thank you to those of you who have renewed. You can renew online or by sending a check. While the renewal deadline is **January 20**, you have a bit of wiggle room until January 30.

You can find all the details on how to renew your membership on the Join spot of our website, <https://my.lwv.org/wisconsin/appleton/join> Membership also may be made by mailing the completed form along with a check to LWV Appleton, P.O. Box 1281, Appleton, WI 54912.

Please don’t hesitate. Renew today and continue to benefit from your membership investment.

Lively Issues: First Chance to Offer Input

By Renee Gralewicz
Director of Programs

So here we are: we finally reached 2021!! This means that we are getting closer to developing new policy statements and starting a new research study group. We start the year with our **Lively Issues** meeting on **January 23**. Lively Issues is the initial step in the LWV process of advocacy. If we want our League to make a stand on any issue or government proposed policy, we need to have thoroughly researched the issue and vote on position statements at the **Consensus Meeting February 13**.

Let me start at the end: Consensus is where we collectively agree upon new position statements regarding an issue. This past year the Climate Change and Resilience Study Group spent an enormous amount of time engaged in scholarship regarding the many integral and interconnected aspects of climate change and the inevitable impact on society. The Study Group is finishing up their educational videos which explain the impacts of climate change. They are also developing the position statements they think we need to advocate. Those statements will be presented to our League Saturday, February 13 (9 a.m. to noon).

The Study Group came about because of a Lively Issues meeting. Climate change was just one of many ideas that was proposed, discussed, and then voted upon. This is why we need you to register and attend the Lively Issues meeting scheduled January 23 (9 a.m. to noon).

Coming Events:

- Saturday, Jan. 23, 2021 – **Lively Issues** – Understanding the Process and Bringing Issues to the Table (9 a.m. to noon)
- Saturday, Feb. 13, 2021 – **Consensus** (9 a.m. to noon)
- Monday, Feb. 15, 2021 – **What's Being Taught About US History in Public Schools?** (5:15 to 6:30 p.m.) Panel: Kris McDaniel, Social Studies consultant, WI DPI, and Tom Clementi, retired History and Humanities teacher from the Appleton Area School District
- Monday, March 15, 2021 – **Reproductive Health Care** (5:15 to 6:30 p.m.) Speaker Margo DeNuccio, Planned Parenthood of WI, Inc. Community Outreach Coordinator
- Monday, April 19, 2021 – **The Structure of Our Local League** (5:15 to 6:30 p.m.) Learn how LWV is organized and the duties and responsibilities of the positions.
- Saturday, May 15, 2021 – **Annual Meeting** (Time TBD)

Considering Public Office? LWVWI Has Resources

Have you ever considered running for public office? Now more than ever, our community needs qualified, dedicated individuals to carry out the duties of local government. While the November elections weren't that long ago, we need to look ahead to important contests coming up this spring. With nearly 6,000 offices up for election in Wisconsin on spring ballots, LWV Wisconsin is working to encourage individuals to step up on behalf of their communities.

LWVWI has put together a digital toolkit of resources to help guide you in deciding to run for office, and how to do that. Information will be updated as new content, especially educational resources, is developed.

Information can be accessed on the LWVWI website.

Wisconsin Redistricting : Make Your Voice Heard

By Linda Bjella
Vice President/Action

In early spring this year, Wisconsin will receive the final results of the 2020 census data. The self-response rate for our state was 72.2%, slightly less than in 2010 when it was 73.5%. The national self-response rate was 67%, slightly higher than in 2010. Outagamie County did an outstanding job with 82.4%, beating the 2010 result which was 80.5%.

The redistricting process will begin when the census data is received sometime this spring. Counties and municipalities will begin working on drawing new districts at that time. A new factor this year will be the People's Maps Commission which will create a state-wide plan. All of these maps will be submitted to the legislature which has the ultimate authority to approve the reapportionment of the state under the Wisconsin Constitution. (It's important to note that the Constitution doesn't state the legislators must *draw* the maps, only that they must *approve* them.)

Since 2010, when the Wisconsin Legislature created heavily gerrymandered maps, much has been happening at the grassroots level in opposition. To date, 54 of Wisconsin's 72 county boards have passed a resolution in favor of nonpartisan redistricting and 27 of those counties have asked voters their opinion in the form of a referendum. One county went directly to the referendum. Referendums have passed by an average of 72%. This [animated map](#) from [The Wisconsin Fair Maps Coalition](#) shows the progression of this impressive state-wide action. In fact, there is only ONE State Senate District that does not include a county supporting fair maps. And there are only FIVE State Assembly Districts that do not include a county that supports fair maps. These are SD 1, AD 39, 58, 97, 98 and 99.

So, what does nonpartisan redistricting mean? Basically, it doesn't allow that partisan voting data be used when drawing district maps. Maps should be drawn with respect to county and municipal boundaries and keeping "communities of interest" intact. It is expected that bills will again be introduced in the Wisconsin Legislature that would create a nonpartisan commission to create district maps rather than leave the task in the hands of legislators. This legislation didn't get anywhere in previous sessions, but the hope is that the overwhelming support of Wisconsin's citizens as expressed through county and municipal referendums will put increasing pressure on our legislators to support these bills.

Your representatives need to hear from you NOW that you oppose another ten years of gerrymandered maps and that you demand a nonpartisan process for redistricting. You can ask them to do several things:

- Suggest that they poll their constituents if they favor nonpartisan redistricting by requesting feedback in their newsletters. (One legislator did this, and it changed his opinion in favor of fair maps!)
- Request them to co-sponsor nonpartisan redistricting legislation once it's introduced. (Watch for MailChimp action alerts with bill numbers.)
- Call on them to request a public hearing for a bill once it's introduced.
- Ask them to meet with you in person or virtually.
- If they are supportive, tell them to be public about it.
- If they're not supportive, you can go public about that.

The [Wisconsin Legislature website](#) provides all the contact information for each lawmaker. It's important to always be respectful even when you disagree with them. This [Fair Maps Toolkit](#) from the Wisconsin Democracy Campaign will provide you with all the information you need to make your case. If you don't get a response, keep contacting them. Remember, they represent YOU!

If you haven't seen any of the virtual meetings of the People's Maps Commission, there are still 4 more sessions listed below. The times have not been announced, but previous meetings have been

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Democracy Awards Recognize AASD Student Marketing Team

By Jacqueline Klimaszewski
Director of Voter Education and Turnout

The Appleton League of Women Voters presented its **2020 Making Democracy Work Award** to the Appleton Area School District Student Marketing Team under the guidance of originator and teacher Cyndi Pavelski.

The mission of the Appleton Area School District Student Marketing Team is to provide high school students with an opportunity to blend their academic knowledge with real-world project engagement, the power of their youthful thinking, and creative expertise of community professionals in order to receive a unique, practical, and educational experience related to business, marketing, entrepreneurial and non-profit career pursuits.

Pavelski accepted the Making Democracy Work Award on behalf of AASD. She started and maintains several education movements including Appleton Career Academy, IT Innovation Academy, North DECA, Mile of Music and ADI Summer Internships, and the AASD Career Based Learning Movement as well as the AASD Student Marketing Team. The award plate was specially designed by the creative and innovative Kristy Meyer from Studio K Stained Glass LLC. LWV of Appleton appreciates the beauty of her work and the consideration she has given to the League.

While respecting each other's opposing political views, two students in the AASD Student Marketing Team partnered to create a two-pronged marketing campaign to inform their peers of the importance and security of the voting process in Wisconsin. So impressive was the resulting "Voice Your Vote Integrity Project" that it earned Grace Demetrician and Elaina Anderson the League's **2020 Making Democracy Work Youth Award**.

The two seniors designed, produced and distributed a unique and engaging mix of media to their peers describing the basic voting process via the Voice Your Vote social media presence they created. They also created the "[Voice Your Vote WI!](#)" YouTube channel to distribute what they called the Integrity Project – an interview series with local election officials describing the efforts to conduct fair, free and secure elections for our community.

The students intend to work with AASD to distribute the materials, both to teachers for classroom use and via the school's parent/student website. The City of Appleton has agreed to share information on its social media. The League also promotes the efforts on its website, lwvappleton.org, and on its Facebook page and Twitter.

The League's Voter Services Committee, under the direction of Jacqueline Klimaszewski and Brian Post, has partnered with the AASD student marketing program for the past four years to find ways to promote voting among younger citizens.

Wisconsin Redistricting, continued

from 5:00-8:00 p.m. The commissioners are all very impressive, and the expert witnesses have been outstanding. Former Attorney General Eric Holder was the first witness to offer testimony. Any citizen can provide written testimony with views on gerrymandering. It is most helpful when specific information on how you have been negatively impacted by gerrymandering is provided to the commission. You can access previous sessions and register for upcoming sessions at [The People's Maps Commission](#).

- Thursday, January 28, 7th CD
- Thursday, February 11, 1st CD
- Thursday, February 25, 6th CD
- Thursday, March 11, 2nd CD