



April 2021



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By Jeanne Roberts, President

March was a busy month again. In this month alone we provided an educational program on women's reproductive health care, advocated for fair maps with a wonderful article written by Action Vice President Linda Bjella and conducted seven candidate forums and a bipartisan townhall style zoom meeting. All of this was done within a DEI lens which has been a goal locally, statewide and nationally.

At the 2020 national convention, the League of Women Voters US elevated their Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) policy to be equal to that of their nonpartisan policy. The full policy reads:

LWV is an organization fully committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion in principle and in practice. Diversity, equity, and inclusion are central to the organization's current and future success in engaging all individuals, households, communities, and policy makers in creating a more perfect democracy.

There shall be no barriers to full participation in this organization on the basis of gender, gender identity, ethnicity, race, native or indigenous origin, age, generation, sexual orientation, culture, religion, belief system, marital status, parental status, socioeconomic status, language, accent, ability status, mental health, educational level or background, geography, nationality, work style, work experience, job role function, thinking style, personality type, physical appearance, political perspective or affiliation and/or any other characteristic that can be identified as recognizing or illustrating diversity.

Media coverage has brought disturbing acts of hate to our attention recently and the Fox Valley is not immune. As a League and individually, how can we turn our understanding and support into action? We can be aware of how our actions impact others. We can be aware of important dates and events. We can support local diverse businesses. We can stand up.

May is Asian American and Pacific Islanders Heritage Month, so be looking for emails or social media posts about how to be an ally and support our local community.

NOTE: Read more from Jeanne on Allyship on page 3.

Day of Action: LWV Appleton Screens New Film

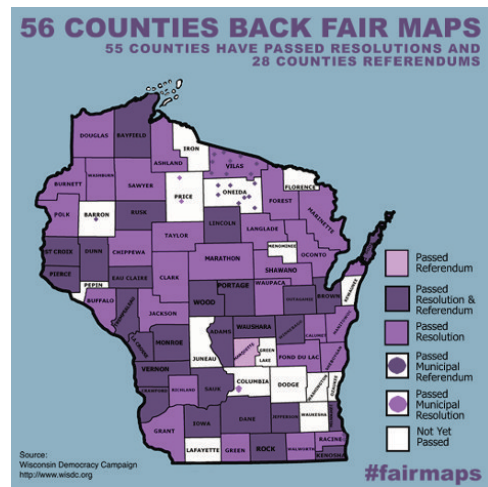
By Linda Bjella, VP Action
The LWV US has designated April 29 as a national “People Powered Day of Action” to focus attention on the all-important issue of redistricting that will take place this year following release of the new census data. Our League is pleased to sponsor a special screening of *CAN YOU HEAR US NOW?*, a powerful new film that shows the personal impact of gerrymandering in Wisconsin.



Watch the 90-minute film anytime between April 25-29, then join a live panel discussion about what’s happening to improve the redistricting process and obtain fair maps in Wisconsin.

Speakers on the April 29 panel from 6:30-7:30 p.m. include:
The film’s co-producers, Susan Peters and Jim Cricchi;
Sheila Plotkin, film subject and founder of the website *We, the Irrelevant*;
Anthony Phillips, People’s Maps Commissioner – 8th Congressional District;
Former State Senator Dave Hansen;
Former Assembly Representative Penny Bernard Schaber, chair of the 8th Congressional District Fair Maps Team, and
Linda Bjella, LWV Appleton Action Vice-President, moderator.

Information is available on the LWV Appleton website, lwwappleton.org with information on how to register to view the film at your leisure, and to participate in the April 29 panel webinar from 6:30-7:30 p.m.



ABOUT THE FILM

“Small-town activism. Nail-biting elections. A last-minute power grab. In Wisconsin, voters are finding their lives increasingly irrelevant to state lawmakers. Through the stories of four tireless women fighting to have their voices heard, *CAN YOU HEAR US NOW?* unravels the ways that years of one-party control have reshaped democracy in a state in the crosshairs of American politics.”

DEI: League Learns to Apply Lens to Allyship

By Jeanne Roberts, President

At the national convention in June 2020, the League of Women Voters (LWV) elevated their Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) policy to the same level as their nonpartisan policy. The policy states LWV is an organization fully committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion in principle and in practice. Diversity, equity, and inclusion are central to the organization's current and future success in engaging all individuals, households, communities, and policy makers in creating a more perfect democracy.

What does that mean for us as a local League? I decided that I would do a little research on being a social justice ally to help answer that question. A Google search indicates that an ally is any person who supports, empowers, or stands up for another person or a group of people or a person who uses their privilege to advocate on behalf of someone else who doesn't hold that same privilege. So how then do we apply a DEI lens to League allyship?

According to multi award-winning Global Diversity, Equity & Inclusion leader Sheree Atcheson in Forbes magazine, to be a true ally, you should:

- Lift others up by advocating;
- Share growth opportunities with others;
- Not view venting as a personal attack;
- Recognize systematic inequalities and realize impact of micro-aggressions;
- Believe underrepresented people's experiences, and
- Most importantly – listen, support, self-reflect and change.

Cecelia Kersten, S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications, gives us these instructions for being a good social justice ally:

1. Research, research and more research!
2. Listen;
3. Don't Practice Performative Allyship;
4. Speak Up in your own social circles;
5. Get comfortable being uncomfortable;
6. Learn from your mistakes,
7. Amplify the voices and messages of diverse communities.

Allyship:

the state or condition of being an ally; supportive association with another person or group; specifically, such association with the members of a marginalized or mistreated group to which one does not belong.

As we move forward with our mission to empower voters and defend democracy using a DEI lens, let's remember what we all need to do to become more effective allies. A good way to begin is by utilizing resources available to us in the Fox Valley, such as the Upstander Training offered free through Lawrence University. Find details here:

<https://www.lawrence.edu/info/offices/diversity-and-inclusion/get-involved/upstander-training>

Community Partners Also Focus on Allyship Issues

By Irene Strohbeen, League Member

The League is in line with other segments of our community which are looking at issues related to Allyship, so it seems appropriate to direct members to some of these other local efforts.

Imagine Fox Cities Invites Participation in Dialog, Surveys

Imagine Fox Cities (IFC) is an inclusive community-wide initiative created to be intentional about shaping the future of the Fox Cities when it comes to well-being. The next series of Community Conversations brought forth by the IFC likely will focus on Class, Privilege, Allyship and Bridging the Divide.

These topics are designed to just get people more experience and comfort in discussing these sometimes-uncomfortable topics. To learn more about the focus of this IFC conversation, follow this [link](#)

In 2019, IFC distributed its first community survey which measured well-being in the Fox Cities. Nearly 3,000 people participated, lending their voice to what the community's living vision for the future should be.

Now, two years later, the initiative would once again like to measure well-being in our community. Results will be reported out in early summer and will help guide decisions and actions needed to improve community well-being for generations to come. You are encouraged to take the survey by clicking [here](#)

Women's Fund Survey Explores Impact of Covid on Women

The **Women's Fund for the Fox Valley Region** (WF) and three other Women's Funds in northeastern Wisconsin have come together to collaborate on a regional study that will lend local data to the assertion made nationwide that women have been disproportionately affected by COVID-19 over the past year.

The Women's Fund for the Fox Valley Region, Fond du Lac Area Women's Fund, the Women's Fund of Greater Green Bay, and The Women's Fund of the Oshkosh Area Community Foundation have joined in developing a survey to be administered by St. Norbert College's Research Center. The survey aims to derive data to show how COVID-19 has impacted women and their families economically and socially one year since the pandemic struck the region.

Participation in the survey is open until April 23. Weigh in on the [survey](#) til then. Data will be compiled into a report to be shared with the public in June. The study is made possible through a grant from the Basic Needs Giving Partnership of the Greater Green Bay Community Foundation, a funding collaborative which includes funds from the U.S. Venture Open Fund for Basic Needs, the J. J. Keller Foundation and other community donors.

Holiday Brunch Silent Auction Call for Creative Donations

The LWV Holiday Brunch isn't until December, but it's never too early to plan for our silent auction event! If you are an artist, chef, crafter, or hobbyist and would like to share your talents and designs with the League, please consider donating your creations to our 2021 Virtual Silent Auction. We are looking for unique one-of-a-kind items to be auctioned off at this year's event. If you think you may be interested in contributing to this year's silent auction, please contact Sue Hopfensperger, Fundraising Chair, at suehop57@gmail.com. Thank you!

LWV Programs Offer Food for Thought

By Renee Gralewicz, VP Programs

April is upon us, though the weather seems to act more like May. It's almost like a time warp, whiplash thing happening to my psyche. One thing that has not changed much is the amount of hate that is being perpetuated across our country. There are things we can do to promote understanding, to act more like anti-racists, and to model the types of communities and neighborhoods we want to live in. We need to be the change in order to promote change.

In preparation for Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage (AAPI) month (May), here is some food for thought I gathered from the [GetFacts website](#).

If English is not the primary language spoken in an Appleton home, it most likely will be an Asian or Pacific Islander language. AAPI individuals are also the largest minority of Appleton, with Hispanic and LatinX close behind. Appleton has a strong and well-organized Hmong community, but that community only comprises about 30% of all Appleton AAPI individuals.

I am highlighting this because of the recent media attention to the brutal violence enacted upon our fellow Americans. I want you to know that our League will not be silent about this. We are going to generate a few educational programs highlighting the historical intentional exclusion of AAPI individuals and families from becoming US citizens, and their continued exclusion from our conversations about race and racism. If you have an interest in helping plan these events or have suggestions, please email me: reneegrlewicz@gmail.com

After the May meeting, the new Programs Committee will start formulating the programs for our 2021 – 2022 series.

Mark your calendar for these upcoming programs:

The Game Show Quiz comes with First, Second, and Third Place prizes. The Study Team created questions that only can be answered by viewing the [educational videos](#) created summarizing some of their research. Here are the game rules:

1. Respond to the quiz with your answers **no later than Friday, April 16** so that winners can be announced during the Monday, April 19 (5:15 – 6:30 p.m.) program.

2. Email your answers to League.Appleton@yahoo.com with the subject line: **QUIZ WINNER**.

Monday, April 19, 5:15 – 6:30 p.m. — We will explore “Our League.” This program will describe our organizational structure and describe the committees which make our League active and viable. Come and listen and hopefully you will find an outlet for your passions and creativity.

Earth Day Scavenger Hunt (April 22 – 25) — Join others across Wisconsin in celebrating our planet. To get more information and to register a team, go to [Wisconsin Earth Day Virtual Scavenger Hunt](#). If you team up, please let Catherine McKenzie (catmckenzie88@gmail.com) know. We want to cheer on our League teams.

Saturday, May 15 (9:00 – 11:00 a.m.) — At the **Annual Meeting** we not only acknowledge our accomplishments, we vote on issues that will guide our future such as our budget and our new positions based on the Climate Change Preparedness and Resilience Study Team research.

First Town Hall with Representatives ‘Cordial, Bi-Partisan’

By Linda Bjella, VP Action

Our first Town Hall was held on Tuesday, March 30. An invitation was sent to Senator Roger Roth, District 19, and Representatives Rachael Cabral-Guevara, District 55; Dave Murphy, District 56, and Lee Snodgrass, District 57. Representative Murphy declined and Senator Roth didn't respond to several emails and calls.



Representative Rachael Cabral-Guevara, Assembly District 55



Representative Lee Snodgrass, Assembly District 57

Representatives Cabral-Guevara and Snodgrass did attend, and although they represent different parties, their discussion was congenial and respectful. Their spirit of cooperation and bi-partisanship was refreshing. It was important that this event was presented in a nonpartisan manner in order for our legislators to want to participate.

Representatives Cabral-Guevara and Snodgrass gave participants good background information about what legislation is currently being considered. The excellent questions that were submitted also gave them good insight into what issues are important to us. We had agreed to send the legislators the questions we had received three days prior to the event, and it was apparent that both legislators came prepared to answer them. Unfortunately, we didn't have time for some of the questions submitted just prior to the Town Hall.

We had 55 people register for the webinar, and the event also was streamed on our Facebook page. Overall, our first attempt at a virtual Town Hall was successful, largely due to our outstanding tech team of Dave Strange and Barb Kelly. Their experience in handling numerous candidate forums with Jacqui Klimaszewski was invaluable.

We plan to have other Legislative Town Halls in the future, and hope it can become a regular event through which Fox Cities residents can meet with their elected representatives to ask questions and exchange views. Events such as this become increasingly important as gerrymandered districts have allowed our legislators to become indifferent to the needs and wants of their constituents.

LWV Appleton Seeks Technology Assistance NOW!

The Technology Team led by Dave Strange and Barbara Kelly has been doing an exceptional job adapting our League programs to multiple virtual platforms for more than a year. Preparing events, messaging and videos, etc., has taken a tremendous amount of tech savvy, and *time*. We are greatly indebted to them for their direction as well as for their hands-on work.



Dave Strange, Barb Kelly

We are attempting to alleviate the responsibility for technology on the shoulders of these two individuals by creating a Communications & Technology Team. The need is *critical* as we continue to plan events from the Annual Meeting to 2021 monthly programs.

If you or someone you know, whether a League member or not, have skills or willingness to learn to work with websites, Zoom, YouTube, video or social media messaging, please offer to help with even one piece of these needs. We are exploring ways to offer some types of incentive for those who assist in this area.

Please contact Kathy Voigt, Director of Communications, to offer your talents or resources by emailing her at voigtkathy71@gmail.com Assistance and training is available.

LWV Appleton Co-Sponsors Climate Justice Rally

Join these partnering organizations for a Climate Justice Rally in Appleton on Saturday, April 24 from noon to 2:00 p.m. and gather on Houdini Plaza to demand climate justice and a sustainable future. The event will call on elected officials at all levels of government to address the climate crisis with the urgency demanded by science, while creating good jobs and ensuring everyone has clean air, clean water, and a healthy environment.

[Sign up here](#) to take action for climate justice and our sustainable future

Event Concept: The event will feature:

1. Land Acknowledgement;
2. Speakers representing a diverse and broad coalition;
3. Signs with climate action, environmental justice, green jobs, and associated messages;
4. Hand-outs with calls to action

Event Links:

- Facebook event - <https://www.facebook.com/events/161093542464965>
- Mobilize registration - <https://www.mobilize.us/ourevolution/event/382720>

Sponsors:

- Citizen Action of Wisconsin
- ESTHER-Fox Valley
- League of Women Voters of Appleton
- Our Wisconsin Revolution
- PopEarth
- Sunrise Movement
- Youth Climate Action Team

LWV Videos Part of Scavenger Hunt



This Earth Day, Wisconsinites are invited to join a virtual scavenger hunt in support of climate action and environmental justice groups across the state. The Wisconsin Earth Day Virtual Scavenger Hunt is a four-day game from April 22-25. In which up to 500 teams will complete missions and answer trivia questions related to the environment and climate change.

LWV Appleton was asked to partner in this activity because of the extensive work our Climate Change Preparedness and Resilience Study Committee conducted over the past two years. Questions related to videos created by our committee will be included in these Earth Day activities.

In addition to our League, organizations involved in this observance include the Wisconsin Sierra Club, Citizens Climate Lobby of Wisconsin, the Dane County Office of Energy & Climate Change, Associated Recyclers of Wisconsin, the Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin, and a dozen others.

From April 22nd-25th, teams of up to six people will be able to play from anywhere in the state using a smartphone app. Top teams and solo players will win prizes and donations for local nonprofits. Tickets are now available on a sliding scale, starting at FREE. The game is family-friendly and children under the age of thirteen are welcome to play with an adult. Click [here](#) for more details.

DEI Book Review: Combat Racism, Change the World

By Kathleen Gribble

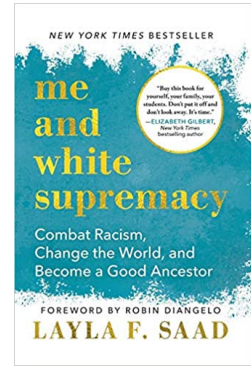
Me and White Supremacy: Combat Racism, Change the World, and Become a Good Ancestor, by Laylaf Saad, an East African, British, Black, Muslim woman

Subtitle of the book - Combat Racism, Change the World, and Become a Good Ancestor - holds the values of the book. This is a good resource for white people with reflective journaling prompts after each chapter. This journaling and sharing process helps us become aware of the depth of internalized white supremacy that usually begins in childhood. The book will help transform your behavior that is complicit in the racist system.

It uses a process with group participation called *The Circe Way* which helps us heal or old stories to make new ones that lead to different actions for creating a better world. The author is motivated by a strong desire to be a better ancestor for generations to come.

Background on the book: Saad's blog post (2017) "I need to Talk to Spiritual White Women About White Supremacy" led to an Instagram challenge which encouraged people to consider their relation to white supremacy for 28 days. Out of this came the digital workbook, *Me and White Supremacy Workbook*. In 2020 this work was developed into her first book, *Me and White Supremacy*. The book has been popular among teachers and a young person's version of the book is planned.

The book can be found at apl.com (Appleton Public Library), amazon.com, or barnesandnoble.com



Another Event of Note

On May 8, make some 'Good Trouble'!

Join Voting Rights Coalition partners coming together across America to demand preservation and expansion of voting rights.

On May 8, 2021, a "John Lewis National Day of Action" will ignite public support for restoring the effectiveness of the Voting Rights Act and address one of the greatest obstacles to the passage of civil and voting rights - and one of the last vestiges of slavery - *the filibuster!*

Participants will take to the streets with more than 100 "Votercades" in more than 100 cities, mobilizing to pass the For the People Act, the John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act, DC Statehood and address the filibuster. Together, we can build a better democracy!