



OCTOBER 2021



PRESIDENTS' MESSAGE

By Marti Hemwall, Co-President



Our League never ceases to amaze us. We have been feeling such energy recently. This year as well as the year that was and the year to come are filled with new initiatives, projects, and changes. What an exciting time to be a member of our League.

With so much activity, the board decided to spend some time away to discuss strategy and priorities. Our half-day retreat was held on Saturday, September 25. We began by taking a few minutes to celebrate our great recent successes. Here are just a few:

- Our membership has grown tremendously. This growth allows us to find volunteers who help improve our outreach to voters all over our community.
- We are developing a wide diversity of new partnerships with other community organizations.
- Our League received the Unsung Hero Award from Celebrate Diversity for helping to make our community welcoming and safe.
- The voter outreach videos developed for the 2020 election have received recognition by both LWVWI and LWVUS.

We then dove into discussion of a number of new initiatives. Hold on to your hats!

1. New League website: The board has been working hard to develop the website on the platform recommended by LWVUS, under the guidance of Dave Strange with help from Barb Kelly, who are doing the difficult behind-the-scenes technological work. The new website will be exciting, interactive, and flexible. It will help us better communicate with the public and to better access information about events, activities, and volunteer opportunities. It will be easier to understand how to advocate for current issues that mean a lot to us. Look forward to an announcement about the roll out.

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Presidents' Message, continued

2. Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Initiative: This project began a while ago but expect more intensive efforts to assure that our League has fully integrated the important principles of DEI, which the LWVUS has identified as important as our nonpartisan value. To begin, the board decided to bring in an outside facilitator for a training session. We'll share what we learn with all committees and members.

The other important first step is to encourage all of us to "show up" for critical votes, events, and activities related to DEI issues – and of course, while wearing League "swag" to make sure we make connections and develop relationships. This then allows us to offer our resources for issues and voting and help us become known as a trusted resource.

3. Name change for the League? Our last topic generated an energizing discussion. Approximately 49% of our membership does not reside in Appleton. In the spirit of inclusivity, we need to examine how to make our name more inclusive, and decide how to better serve members not living in the city of Appleton. We consider this part of our DEI Initiative. Look for more information to come soon about the proposed change. We hope to roll out the name change along with our new website. That should make quite the splash! We certainly are having an exciting year. Please stay tuned for more updates on all these issues.

Membership Continues to Grow

By Cindy Fallona, Membership Director

Fall has arrived but my summer flowers thankfully have not received the message and are still beautiful! That first frost is lurking just around the corner.

Our membership ranks continue to grow as well. Please welcome three new members:

Sarah Hess – Appleton; **Aileen Riggins** – Appleton, **Laura Kemps** – Neenah

The Legislative Town Hall on Oct. 4 was a success. The League program lineup for this fall is impressive; November 15th and December 11th are our next program dates.

If you know someone interested in LWV Appleton, invite them to attend. Or send me their name and contact information and I will invite them. Contact me at cbfallona@hotmail.com

Remember; it is EASY to join League! Read more about the League at lwwappleton.org

Thanks to You for Supporting League

By Diane Putzer, Treasurer

In early August, the fundraising committee sent a mailing to League members and past supporters highlighting our league's activities over the past year, outlining major priorities for the 2021/2022 fiscal year, and encouraging donations to the League.

Many thanks to the 32 members and supporters who have invested \$3,030 through the end of September to ensure the League's mission!

Voter Registration Day Results in New Partnership

By **Jacqueline Klimaszewski, Director
Voter Education & Turnout**

National Voter Registration Day is a nonpartisan designation celebrating democracy and our right to vote. First observed in 2012, the event has gained momentum, with nearly 4.5 million voters registering on that date since its inception. Celebrated on the fourth Tuesday of September, the day is intended to create broad awareness of voter registration opportunities and reach potential voters who might not have registered otherwise.



In conjunction with National Voter Registration Day, our Voter Services Team has been looking for ways to get the word out encouraging voters to make sure they are registered. We have been at some events—outdoors and following CDC guidelines—but we wanted to find ways to connect with more people.

One of our newest League (and Voter Services Team) members is Lisa Nitecki. She has connected us with the Starbucks regional manager (thank you, Lisa!) to work with us on ways to get voting registration reminders out to their customers. The League of Women Voters of Winnebago County was excited to join us on this project.

Each of the Starbucks received table tents, wallet cards and 500 stickers to add to the cardboard sleeves for the cups (pictured above). We have reached 10 Starbucks in the Outagamie/ Winnebago County areas. Thank you to Laurie Cesar, Sandi Rohde, Joyann Eggert and Posy Thurow (from Winnebago County) for delivering the packets to the cafes.

The next time you are in Starbucks, thank them for their participation in this project!! We hope to repeat it before the spring elections.

We are interested in working with other businesses—cafes, stores, hair salons, barbers, civic organizations, etc. that would be willing to use any of the three—table tents, wallet cards by the checkouts or stickers. Contact J. Klimaszewski, 830-2919, jjklim@new.rr.com if you know of a place that should be on our list. Thanks!

2022 Election Schedule

Spring Primary, if needed: February 15, 2022
County Board, School Board, City Council (Even number districts)

Spring Election: April 5, 2022

Fall Partisan Primary: August 9, 2022
Includes Assembly, Congressional and Senate Districts

Fall Election: November 8, 2022

Advocacy: Officials Listen When LWV Speaks

By Linda Bjella, Co-President

It is humbling to speak on behalf of our League to local government leaders. I have had an opportunity to deliver three statements in recent months on behalf of you, our members. Our elected officials listen when League speaks because they know that our positions are backed by years of careful research and represent the consensus of our members. This study and consensus process is unique, and it has always served our organization well throughout our century of advocating for good government.

In August, I spoke to the Appleton Area School District Board of Education in favor of a mask mandate. It was a learning experience for me to formulate the statement. It always starts with our positions. The League never advocates publicly unless we have a position to support what we say. So, I started by combing through our local positions. We don't have a position that specifically addresses wearing masks in schools, of course, but that's the genius of our League positions. They are written to be general enough to be able to apply to unforeseen circumstances.

Here was the statement:

August 23, 2021

Statement to the Appleton Area School District Board of Education on a mask mandate

The League of Women Voters of Appleton believes that one of the primary goals of a school district is to provide a safe and secure environment on every campus for all students, staff, and visitors. The League also strongly supports following public health guidelines regarding communicable diseases. Therefore, we urge the Appleton Area School District Board and administration to follow current CDC guidelines which recommend that masks be worn in all indoor settings in areas of substantial or high COVID-19 transmission regardless of vaccination status. The League's positions provide the basis for this statement. We formulate our positions after carefully researched studies that have been ratified by our membership. Thank you for this opportunity to share our positions.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Bjella

LWV Appleton, co-president

And here are the specific position statements I used to support it:

Public Health Services (1986)

"Support public health services which include...communicable disease control."

Education – School Safety (1983 and 1993, revised 2006 and 2019)

"The primary goal of a school district is to provide a safe and secure environment on all campuses for all students, staff, and visitors..."

I was involved in the Education Study in 2019, and I know that our position statement was written in the context of the threat of gun violence in schools, but you can see how this statement can be used very effectively to address the threat of the pandemic as well.

Sometimes it takes more digging to find a relevant position. I made statements to the Outagamie County Finance Committee and to the full County Board in September. The first was to state the League's view on how funds from the American Rescue Plan Act should be used, and the second was on the subject of redistricting. In both cases, we were able to use local, state, and national positions to undergird our official statements. I want to especially thank our Action VP Jan Quinlan for her help in researching and writing these statements.

Virtual Fair Maps Lobby Day Draws 200+ Advocates

By Ann Muenster and Carol Lenz
SD19 Fair Maps Team Leaders

NOTE: The People's Maps have been released, and may be viewed by clicking on this link:
<https://govstatus.egov.com/peoplesmaps/work-records>

Over 200 citizens participated in the virtual Fair Maps Lobby Day on Monday, September 28. During the 113 legislator meetings, we used our collective voices to advocate for a fair, transparent non-partisan process for drawing our voting district maps. We proudly boast to having had 29 participants on the Senate District 19 team, the most participants of any senate district and the most well prepared, too!

Our team held four legislative meetings during which we asked legislators to:

1. Support and pass the nonpartisan redistricting bills that have been introduced (SB389 / AB395).
2. Take up the maps created by The People's Map Commission.
3. Reject Pro-Gerrymandering Resolution AJR80 / SJR63.

We met with Michael Donatello, Sen. Roger Roth's office (SD19), and Michael Moscicke, Rep. Dave Murphy's office (AD56). While disappointing not to have anyone in Rep. Rachel Cabral-Guevara's office (AD55) to speak with, a recording of our presentation was sent. The results of our visits with the staffers revealed that they are likely to be less knowledgeable about the Fair Maps bills than we are, and in some cases, are misinformed about the People's Maps Commission work and the goals of nonpartisan redistricting.

The day following the Fair Maps Lobby Day, all three of these legislators voted to approve the joint resolution, which supports using the current gerrymandered maps for another decade.

The final meeting of the afternoon was with Rep. Lee Snodgrass (AD57) and Fawn George, office staff, who were both in attendance. Rep. Snodgrass is supportive of all three asks and voted against the joint resolution.

It is essential that all of us continue to pressure legislators who are resistant to Fair Maps. Attend rallies, write letters to the editor, continue to make calls and send emails to the legislators. Continue to organize and build our ranks of volunteers to educate voters and mobilize them to take action with us.

Needless to say, our work to achieve fair representation has only just begun. **Are you with us as we continue to fight for Fair Maps?**

Wisconsin Fair Maps Coalition: <https://www.fairmapswi.com/>

Help Boost LWV Appleton: Share Facebook Messages

The League of Women Voters of Appleton shares important information on its Facebook page: event details, voter information, resources and other news of interest to League members.



Each time someone Likes or Shares our messages, the impact multiplies exponentially, and we connect with a broader group of people.

We'd like to amplify the impact of the League's Facebook messages. Please help us Empower Voters and Defend Democracy by sharing our content! Like, Share, and repost. Put it out there on all your social media channels.

Thank you for helping to promote the mission of the League!

DEI Study Committee Setting Focus on Health Care

By Renee Gralewicz, VP Programs

Remember our May 2021 Annual Meeting where we agreed that our study focus would be, “Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) issues in the Appleton Area for 2021 – 2022”? As you can imagine, there are a lot of paths that the study could take!! With the guidance of Linda Bjella, Jeanne Roberts, Shirley Strange, Gayle Hardt and April Savage, our League’s upcoming study is taking shape. So far, more than 20 people have joined us in conversations about the study, and we decided that we will focus our attention on area health care systems.

Yes, this is still very broad and a bit daunting. We’re currently thinking about researching the following topics. Please note that the list is not conclusive. If you have other health care issues that you feel deserve our League’s attention, please email me at reenegralewicz@gmail.com

- Public Health/ Preventative
- Hospital/ Clinical/ Urgent Care
- Pharmacy
- Under/ Uninsured/ Access
- Medical Professionals (e.g., school nurse)
- Holistic [e.g., foods, herbology, functional medicines]
- Mental Health/ Access/ Availability
- Home care/ Long term/ Elder care
- Maternal Health/ Reproductive Health
- LGBTQ+ / Gender affirming care

Our study will assess and understand the status and practices of current health care structures, including looking at their mission statements and annual reports. We intend to contact experts in the field as well as people who work(ed) within the health care system. Additionally, we will interview those who have used or been denied access. So, you can see that there are still a lot more decisions to be made before we get to the heart of our research.

No one is going to be asked to do all of the research; we hope that you will join us in this exploration if you have knowledge of, or interest in, the study. Your help is based on your time and interest. For example, if you’re passionate about health care access for homeless, you could help us out with just this area of the study. Our next meeting is Thursday, October 28, 5:30 – 7:00 p.m. (Green Bay Packers play at 7:20). Contact Renee if you have interest. We’d love to have your help.

Looking Forward to Colorful Autumn, Colorful Events

By Renee Gralewicz, VP Programs

So, we’re back where we started from, sort of. Back, although while most area residents are vaccinated against COVID-19, clearly not enough are to stop the second wave of infections, thus causing us to go back to virtual meetings. At least we have the technologies and will to keep our programs available.

Thank you, Brian Post, for your insightful September 13 presentation, “Civil Discourse to Change Public Discourse.” Brian offered us a few ideas on how to keep civility during difficult conversations. We all need this skill in order to strengthen our democracy!!

On November 15 (5:00 – 6:30 p.m.), Nancy Jones will share with us avenues into local engagement and why it’s important for all of us to stay engaged within our community. Jones, who embodies community service, is instrumental in starting a new organization, Equity Network, whose mission is to “Create a regional network of organizations committed to monitoring local decision-making using a civil rights strategy that holds network members and policymakers accountable in our community.” Click [HERE](#) to register for the virtual meeting.

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Colorful Events, continued

Oh, by the way, we'll be sharing time and space together (pandemic permitting) Saturday, December 11, for our annual Holiday Brunch at Bubolz Nature Preserve (4815 N Lynndale Dr., Appleton, WI 54913). Our program there will be entertainment provided by Voices of Hope, a reader's theatre presentation that brings to life the stories of immigrants living in the Fox Valley through prose, poetry and music. Look for more information and an invitation in early November.

Please save the following dates.

- November 15, 2021 (Monday, 5:00 – 6:30 p.m., virtual) – Local Engagement by Nancy Jones
- December 11, 2021 (Saturday, 10:00 a.m.- noon at Bubolz) – Annual Holiday Brunch with performances by Voices of Hope
- January 15, 2022 (Saturday) – Lively Issues (Time and location TBD)
- February 7, 2022 (Monday, 7:00 – 8:30 p.m.) – Legislative Town Hall (virtual)
- February 21, 2022 (Monday) – Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Study Update (Time and location TBD)
- March 21, 2022 (Monday, 5:00 – 6:30 p.m., Copper Rock Coffee, downtown Appleton) – (Multicultural) Local Women Business Leaders
- April 18, 2022 (Monday, 5:00 – 6:30 p.m., Copper Rock Coffee, downtown Appleton) – AAPI Heritage Celebrations
- May 21, 2022 (Saturday) – Annual Meeting (Time and location TBD)

Women's Equality Day Tops 19th Amendment Jubilee

By Susan Silton, Co-chair

On August 26, 2021, the 101st Anniversary of the ratification of the 19th Amendment, more than 125 members of the community gathered to celebrate this event. The partners who contributed to the success were League of Women Voters of Appleton, Women's Fund for the Fox Valley Region, Mid-Day Women's Alliance, Northeast Wisconsin Delta Sorority Alumni Chapter, and AAUW. The in-person event took place at UWO Fox Cities Campus and included a delicious appetizer buffet from Zuppas Catering, and a wine and water bar.



Author Elaine Weiss



Karen Nelson, Linda Bjella, Cindy Fallona

The highlight of the event was a presentation by Elaine Weiss, the author of *The Woman's Hour*, *The Great Fight to Win the Vote*. Her presentation was preceded by a welcome and introductory remarks by League Co-President Linda Bjella and Appleton Council Member and League member Denise Fenton, followed by closing remarks by League Co-President Marti Hemwall, and a book signing by Elaine Weiss.

The video of the Women's Equality Day program is now posted on the League Facebook page and the website. The YouTube link is <https://youtu.be/Wyr2LqOCzM>



Jacqui Klimaszewski, Marti Hemwall

Empower Your Creativity - for the League!

In conjunction with this year's Holiday Brunch (Dec. 11), we will be raising funds through a virtual silent auction to support our 2022 activities. If you're an artist, crafter, cook, multi-talented or all-around generous person, please consider donating something from your handiwork. We're looking for unique items such as knit wear, jewelry, ceramics—just to name a few. Your donation could be as simple as a gift certificate or a Zoom cooking lesson with you!
All donations are greatly appreciated and are tax deductible.

To contribute to the silent auction, please email Sue at suehop57@gmail.com. Thank you!

ACTION: Help Us Keep an 'Ear to the Ground'

By Jan Quinlan, Vice President, Action

Fair Maps!

Now is the time to make our voices heard for Fair Maps. Over 80% of Wisconsin voters supported non-partisan redistricting in a recent poll. Here's what we've done recently to advocate for Fair Maps: LWV Appleton alerted members to a Fair Maps Pack the Park Rally held at Bay Beach in Green Bay on August 28. Linda Bjella spoke at a public hearing on Fair Maps and County Redistricting on September 14. On September 27, a number of our League members participated by Zoom in WI Fair Maps Coalition's full day of lobbying legislators with Ann Muenster, Carol Lenz, Linda Bjella and Jacqui Klimaszewski taking leadership roles. What's next? Please contact your state legislators and encourage them to hold a public hearing on Fair Maps legislation.

American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)

Outagamie County hosted 9 listening sessions with frontline organizations to help determine their priorities for using \$35M in federal funding from the American Rescue Plan Act. Our League participated in 4 of these sessions, and in early September Linda Bjella sent a letter to County Executive Tom Nelson and all OC Supervisors supporting ARPA funding as per League's support positions: Safe and resilient environment; Strengthened child care and enhanced services for families in need; Adequate affordable housing; Coordination among local governments in the Fox Valley region to benefit the greatest number of people. Stay tuned for much more information as our counties and municipalities make decisions about how to use federal rescue dollars.



Post-Crescent Photo

Mask Mandates

Our League supports mask mandates for local school districts based on our Public Health Services position: "Support public health services which include...communicable disease control," and our Education – School Safety position: "The primary goal of a school district is to provide a safe and secure environment on all campuses for all students, staff, and visitors..." Linda Bjella presented our League statement on mask mandates to the AASD Board of Education on August 23. A number of our members also participated in a pro-mask mandate rally outside the school district offices on August 23. Ann Muenster and Jan Quinlan's photo was on the front page of the Post-Crescent and later USA Today following that rally.

Executive Action Team

Jan Quinlan has recruited 14 of our LWV-Appleton members who are active in local government issues to serve on the Executive Action Team. These members will alert Jan to emerging issues in our community, and in turn Jan will work with League leaders to take action. The Exec Action Team wrote some of the questions for our Legislative Town Hall on October 4.

Would you like to help us keep an ear to the ground on local issues? Please contact Jan Quinlan (920-205-4659) or jldquinlan@gmail.com. Jan can talk with you about the League's Observer Corps monitoring local public meetings which now can be done virtually. Together we will find the best fit for you.

Legislative Town Hall – October 4

Our second Legislative Town Hall listening session was a success as a smoothly-running and engaging program with District 57 Representative Lee Snodgrass. Thanks to moderator Linda Bjella, Penny Bernard-Schaber and Jan Quinlan for planning; to Dave Strange, Barb Kelly and Mike Goodnight for help with the Zoom technology; to Renee Gralewicz for program promotions, and to Kathy Voigt for outreach to media.

We were disappointed none of our other area legislators participated in this virtual Town Hall meeting. All received written invitations in late August and emailed invitations in early September, and were invited by phone calls to their offices several more times in mid to late September. WLUK Fox11 News featured this story the night of the Town Hall meeting: <https://fox11online.com/news/local/league-of-women-voters-of-appleton-host-virtual-town-meeting>

Our **next Legislative Town Hall** listening session is scheduled for **February 7, 2022**. Please encourage your state legislator to join us this time, as all of them have already received this date.

Turn the Member Spotlight on Miriam Douglass

First, a short bio. I grew up in Orono, Maine where my father was a professor of chemistry at the University of Maine. He inspired my interest in chemistry, as he let me dabble in his lab and later employed me on his summer research projects during high school and college.

My mother was a piano teacher and choir director and encouraged me in playing the violin. Our high school had an amazing music program for a small school (43 graduated in my class), and I played in the orchestra (violin) and band (sousaphone) and sang in the choruses.

Sports were also a big part of my life. My friend and I organized and coached a basketball team when the gym teacher and boys' coach would not (that was before Title IX). We had a hard time getting practice time in the new gym until my mother convinced the Superintendent that our taxes had paid for the gym and we deserved access. In the spring I played softball and in the summers participated in the various sand lot baseball and football games going.

I went to Oberlin College where I majored in Chemistry, then on to Northwestern University for a Ph.D. in Organic Chemistry. My career was spent as a research chemist at the Colgate-Palmolive Co. Technology Center in Piscataway, NJ, where I met my future wife, Ligia Rivera. I also taught chemistry as an adjunct professor at Rutgers University and later at Fox Valley Technical College after I moved to Wisconsin.

The League has been a big part of my life for over 50 years - the first 33 in New Jersey and

later here in Appleton, where I moved in 1999. Many of my best friends - women and men - I met in the League, where we shared study and action on many interesting and important societal issues. The recent study of Climate

Change Preparedness has been a fascinating part of my life over the last two years. Having my wife on the study committee added fun conversations to the effort. The current promise of a new library in Appleton also is rewarding after our 2012-2014 League study and support position.



In New Jersey, because of my technical background, I chaired the National League study of hazardous waste disposal which led to support of the federal Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) of 1976. This study led to two significant local outcomes for me. Our Piscataway League was a major force in preventing the building of housing on land contaminated by toxic chemicals and which later became a Superfund site. I realized that RCRA would force a 180-degree change in disposal of lab chemicals. This led me to develop a new cradle-to-grave chemical management system which was implemented in the research center where I worked.

Some other things I love to do are travel, be outside walking or working in the garden, play the recorder with two ensembles, attend musical concerts and read. A favorite book is "Timefulness - How Thinking Like a Geologist Can Help Save the World," by Lawrence Professor Marcia Bjornerud. It has been very helpful to me in developing perspective in the midst of our human-caused climate crisis.

League Member to Address Reparations at Presentation

Reparation is the making of amends for a wrong that's been done, by paying money to or otherwise helping those who have been wronged. It's also about repairing relationships and keeping relationships in repair.

Join the Appleton Public Library's Civic Conversation series featuring League member Dr. Renee Gralewicz, who will help us learn what communities like Evanston, IL and countries like Germany are doing to make amends, as well as what is happening right here in Wisconsin. The League is co-sponsoring this virtual presentation on Wednesday, October 20 from 6:00 to 7:00 p.m. [Register here.](#)