



MARCH 2022

Co-Presidents' Message: Resolve to Take Action



By Co-Presidents Marti Hemwall and Linda Bjella

We have so much to celebrate in our League.

Our new website site is up and running! Many thanks to Dave Strange, who has worked hard to help us with this transition, as well as Barb Kelly, Kathy Voigt and others who have helped.



By now, we hope all of you have been able to log into the Members Only part of our new website and find it user-friendly. Don't forget to complete your personal profile! You can indicate your interests, volunteer (or not) for any of our many opportunities to participate, tell us whether to include your information in the members-only directory. We hope our new website becomes known as a place to get up-to-date and reliable information for voters.

Our new name is now official! The press release about our name and our reach across the Fox Cities, in addition to recent statements to city councils and school boards, Town Hall discussions, and our Candidate Forums, have raised awareness of the League and increased our credibility. We were interviewed by WHBY recently to describe how we can be helpful to everyone in our community. The Post-Crescent | USA TODAY NETWORK-Wisconsin reached out to interview Linda Bjella on the implications of a recent Wisconsin Supreme Court ruling regarding fair maps. More government officials mention the League's work during meetings.

We have been asked to host the 2022 Annual Meeting of the LWV of Wisconsin! It is exciting to host LWVWI members from across the state June 10-11. Plan on attending at least a session or two. The meeting runs all day Friday through Saturday morning. In addition, we plan to invite everyone to march in the Flag Day parade Saturday afternoon and have reserved the Lamers Trolley for those who would rather not walk. Plan to join the fun! Information and details are forthcoming in spring newsletters.

These are just a few of the many achievements and changes we can celebrate at the local annual meeting which will be held at Pullmans at Trolley Square on Thursday, May 19. New swag for the League will be introduced. We hope you will join us in what will certainly be a fun event!

PROGRAMS: Lineup Leads into Annual Meeting May 19

By Renee Galewicz, VP Programs

March is a month of quick changes. Our weather gets warmer, and we enjoy more daylight. It's hopeful. For some Anishinaabe Peoples (Ojibwe, Odawa, Potawatomi, Mississaugas, Nipissing and Algonquin peoples) the third moon of the year is Onaabani-Gizzis or the Hard Crust Moon. This reflects the quick changing climate as the snow becomes crustier as the layers slowly melt. For some, this month is meant to honor Mars, the god of war. It was originally the first month of the year for the Romans. For many, March also hosts many religious holy days such as the Christian season of Lent, Hindu Holi - Maha Shivaratri, Jewish Purim: The Feast of Lots, Sikh Hola Mohalla, Pagan and Wiccan Ostara: The celebration of the spring equinox, Zoroastrian and Baha'i celebrations of Naw Ruz. For those with less or no religious traditions, March also includes Good Samaritan Involvement Day, and Atheists Pride Day.

For me, March means the start of planning for our **Annual Meeting on Thursday, May 19th** at 5:00 p.m.

What we've accomplished during the Lively Issues meeting generated a number of program ideas for next year. The list below is tentative, and if you have ideas regarding speakers, please send them my way by emailing program@lwwappletonfoxcities.org

- **September** A panel explaining and discussing the potentials of the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), which are the Local Fiscal Recovery Funds provided by the U.S. Department of Treasury to help local governments, businesses and individuals with Covid pandemic recovery.
- **October** A panel exploring local housing issues.
- **November** Presentation regarding local immigration issues and populations.
- **December** Annual Holiday Brunch.
- **January 2023** Lively Issue conversation.
- **February 2023** The DEI Study Group will present possible positions for consensus.
- March and April 2023 are still open for topic suggestions.

Our current slate of programs for this year includes the March 21st program on local minority business leaders (email invitations will be sent soon), and the April 18th program acknowledging Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders. Both programs will be virtual. Watch for details soon.

Please save the following dates.

- March 21 (Monday, 5:00 – 6:30 p.m.) – Local Minority Business Leaders (virtual)
- April 18 (Monday, 5:00 – 6:30 p.m.) – AAPI Heritage Celebrations (virtual)
- May 19 (Thursday, 5:00 – 7:00 p.m.) – Annual Meeting [Pullmans at Trolley Square, 619 S Olde Oneida St, Appleton, WI 54915]

DEI: Our Appleton Area Healthcare Study Update

By Renee Galewicz, VP Programs

We are being mindful of the stress our healthcare providers have been under for the past few years. This means that we have not officially reached out seeking their perspectives on area services. We have nearly completed our research regarding the types of services provided as detailed by their websites, and we have nearly completed our investigations into local demographics. Below is our tentative timeline. If you have connections or ideas of who we should approach for interviews, please let us know. Email program@lwwappletonfoxcities.org

February - May 2022

- Continue and complete team research
- Prepare draft or outline of findings
- Present updates/findings to Board April 6 (tentatively)
- Present update to Membership May 19 (at the Annual Meeting)

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ACTION: Keeping an Eye on ARPA Options

By Jan Quinlan, Action Vice President

What's so special about ARPA funds?

Just this: The 2021 American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) is sending millions of dollars to our local governments in the next two years. This money is intended to be used for pandemic relief to struggling individuals and organizations especially targeted to our most vulnerable people.

And, our local governments get to choose how best to use these ARPA funds. Appleton, Grand Chute, and Outagamie, Calumet, and Winnebago Counties have taken very different approaches to determining how best to use ARPA funds. Other cities and villages are just getting started in making ARPA decisions.

How can our League help with this? By observing our local government meetings we can assure that this one-time ARPA funding is used wisely and helps those who need it most.

We need your eyes and ears at those meetings to let us know what's happening.

If you already enjoy seeing government in action -- or if you've always wanted to learn first-hand how our local government actually works -- this is a golden opportunity for you. We will provide you orientation and most meetings are now available online. It's never been easier.

If you're interested in joining our ARPA Observer Team, contact Jan Quinlan at action@lwwappletonfoxcities.org for more information.

ACTION: State Supreme Court Rules on 'Fairer' Maps

By Linda Bjella, Co-President

On Thursday, March 3, the Wisconsin Supreme Court issued a 4-3 ruling, selecting redistricting maps submitted by Governor Evers over several others submitted including one from the Republicans in the state legislature. Last November, when the court agreed to hear the case, the justices issued a rule that all maps submitted had to follow a "least changes" approach. It should be noted that it is unusual for the state supreme court to hear a redistricting case. These cases usually proceed through federal courts.

It was also unusual to require a "least changes" criterion. This is not a constitutional provision for redistricting, and it meant that any new maps would start from the existing maps that were put in place in 2011. When those maps were created, 40% of Wisconsin voters were moved from one district to another -- hardly "least changes".

Justice Brian Hagedorn was the swing vote in this year's redistricting case. In his opinion, he stated that the map submitted by Gov. Evers did the best at following the "least changes" rule. Using the governor's maps, there will be more competitive seats than is the case with the current maps. Evers also added one more majority-minority district than we presently have in the Milwaukee area. While it is likely that Republicans will still retain control of the state assembly and senate using the new maps, they will probably fall short of a veto-proof majority.

So, is that the end of the story for the next decade? Not hardly. Already the Republicans in the legislature have filed an appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court (SCOTUS) requesting a stay that would allow the current maps to remain in force. According to Mel Barnes, a lawyer with Law Forward, it seems unlikely that the SCOTUS will take the case. A new district map must be in place for the November election and that process begins on March 15. That is the date that the Wisconsin Elections Commission must give notice to candidates about what the new districts will look like, thus making it likely that the maps proposed by Gov. Evers will determine districts in the 2022 election.

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MAPS: State Supreme Court Rules on Maps, continued from page 3

Depending on the outcome of the fall, 2022 election, there will be other challenges to the maps. Should a new Republican governor be elected, the new GOP-majority legislature will likely try once again to put the maps they proposed in place again next year going forward into 2024. There will also be further challenges in the federal courts based on Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act. This is the provision that requires that majority-minority districts be structured in such a way that those voters have an opportunity to elect their candidate of choice.

In 2023, there will be an election for the Wisconsin Supreme Court. Conservative Justice Patience Roggensack is retiring, and should a more progressive justice be elected in her place, a further challenge by Democrats could move the maps in a more liberal direction by 2024.

So, stay tuned and stay engaged!

DEI: Exhibit Includes Informative Resources About Bias

By Jeanne Roberts, DEI Director

Recently the Weidner Center sponsored a travelling exhibit called "The Bias Inside Us". The exhibit is a community engagement project featuring a Smithsonian traveling exhibition, the centerpiece for local programs and activities that raise awareness about the science and history of bias and what people can do about it. The exhibit may be viewed online at <https://biasinsideus.si.edu/online-exhibition/>

On this website, you'll find resources for teachers, communities and individuals to learn more about implicit bias. The project is grounded in research and teaches us that bias is inside everyone, that it is part of being human. League members Jeanne Roberts and Renee Gralewicz attended the exhibit at the Weidner Center, and reviewed the online exhibit which is still available to all League members.

The online exhibit includes information and activities that teach about several areas including: Bias Lives Inside Us All, The Science of Bias, Bias in Real Life, Serious Consequences, #Retrain Your Brain, and a Conclusion. While the in-person exhibit was excellent, the on-line version offers similar information with some activities intended to help understand bias, microaggressions and ways to deal with them.

PROGRAMS:

DEI Healthcare Study Update,

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May - August

- Develop connections in preparation of interviews

August - November

- Conduct interviews
- Receive presentations from agencies

November - January 2023

- Complete interviews
- Start writing positions
- Prepare presentations for Consensus

LWV WI: Webinars Focus on Important Role of State Courts

The League of Women Voters of Wisconsin is launching a series of webinars to inform Wisconsinites on the role of state courts, issues surrounding the judiciary and the importance of voting in judicial elections. The first of this series is "Understanding Wisconsin's Courts and Judicial Elections," an introductory look at the function and role of state courts in our lives. [Join the League at noon on Wednesday, March 16 for this virtual event.](#) This webinar will feature **Prof. Jolly Emrey**, Associate Professor and Chair, Political Science Department at UW-Whitewater, and **Judge Paul Higginbotham**, former Appellate Judge (2003-2017), Circuit Court Judge (1994-2003), and City of Madison Municipal Judge (1992-93). Go online to <https://www.vote411.org/> to find out who's on your ballot.

VOTING: League Coordinates, Offers Candidate Forums

By Brian Post and Jacqui Klimaszewski, Voter Services Community Outreach

Voter Services Team members have identified several businesses/organizations that have agreed to put out table tents and offer cards encouraging people to use My Vote to prepare themselves to vote by registering, finding their polling place, requesting absentee ballots, and finding upcoming election dates. If you own a business or know of one who would like to promote voting, please contact us at voterservice@lwwappletonfoxcities.org



Connecting with High Schools/Colleges

In response to Covid pandemic restrictions, LWV Appleton-Fox Cities is piloting a program with Appleton High School East Key Club members to encourage high school seniors to register and vote. The Key Club members attended voter registration training and are planning to visit the 12 senior home rooms on March 11 to promote voter registration. We're hopeful that the success of this pilot program will prompt other high schools to implement it going forward.

Promoting Candidate Interviews and Forums Appleton School Board

Interviews with each of the eight candidates are available on our [website](#). Please view and share!

Appleton City Council, Grand Chute Board, Outagamie Board

The following elections have been offered an opportunity to participate in a candidate forum. Our approach has been that both candidates must agree to participate for a video to be produced and posted on our [website](#). Here are the elections we made offers to and which ones will have a video produced:

Grand Chute Town Board

- Grand Chute–Seat 4 Gehring/Torrance - recorded as a forum, available now
- Seat 2-Ings/Showalter - Ings chose not participate

Appleton City Council

- District #4–Del Toro/Van Astin – will be produced and available the week of March 7.
- District 10– Individual interviews for Vaya Lauren Jones and Michael Smith available now.
- District 12- Wolff/Meyers - Meyers not participating
- District #6–Fenton/Dannecker - Dannecker not participating

Outagamie County Board Supervisors

- District 11- Thyssen/Ferguson – no response from Thyssen as yet
- District 14- Woodzicka/Hermes – no response from Hermes as yet
- District 18- Spears/Thomas -Thomas not participating
- District 19- Davidson/Cooke – will be produced and available week of March 7
- District 21- Cuff/Dorman – no response from Dorman as yet
- District 22- Hagen/Hartzheim - Hartzheim not participating

Voter Registration Events

The Voter Services Team is ready to adapt to current local and national health guidelines and begin in-person registration events indoors and outdoors. Watch for opportunities and please suggest potential events by contacting us: voterservice@lwwappletonfoxcities.org.

VOTE411

Please check out [Vote411](#) to learn about candidate positions on issues.

MEMBERSHIP: Be Sure to Set Up a Member Account

By Cindy Fallona, Membership Director

Join me in welcoming our newest member, SUSAN MEADE, from Appleton!

The new website for League of Women Voters Appleton-Fox Cities is an outstanding opportunity for the League to connect with the public. As important as our connection to the public is the connection with our members.

Each member received an email containing a user ID and temporary password. I hope that you have gone to the website, lwwappletonfoxcities.org, to set up your personal account. As a member with an account, you are able to view information that the general public cannot.

Your Member Profile is also where you can let us know what areas of the League's activities are of interest to you. We hope you'll also find a spot where you'd like to take part, put your skills and interests into action.

If for any reason you have not activated your account and would like assistance, contact me, Cindy Fallona, at membership@lwwappletonfoxcities.org

Know Just What to Say? We May Have the "Card" for you!

The Membership Team is adding a new avenue to connect with our members and we need a volunteer to take charge. If you enjoy reaching out to people in times of:

Happiness • Sadness • Health Issues • Family additions •
Or any other life events

then you could be the person to send a card with a message of support from the League of Women Voters of Appleton-Fox Cities.



We provide League note cards and stamps. You will send the card with a simple message to the member on behalf of the League. Any League member can let us know when a note to another member would be appropriate. They can do so by simply emailing me at membership@lwwappletonfoxcities.org and I will forward the details to the person coordinating this outreach. Interested in this project but want more information? Contact me at this same email.

VOTING: HELP Needed at the Polls!

If you are looking for a way to serve our community and serve democracy, consider becoming a poll worker! Many municipalities are in dire need of poll workers from a variety of factors: Covid, poll workers getting older, and—let's face it!!—the negative press around election reliability. We need to help everyone remember that poll workers are our neighbors and friends, they are trained every year and that the system of checks and balances in the process are rigorous and adhered to. The best way to do that is to speak from personal experience.

LWV-WI website page on being a poll worker: <https://my.lwv.org/wisconsin/article/have-you-considered-serving-poll-worker>

Wisconsin Elections Commission provides information on being a poll worker: <https://elections.wi.gov/elections-voting/voters/become-a-poll-worker>

The MyVote website page will help connect you to your municipality to indicate your interest in being a poll worker: <https://myvote.wi.gov/en-us/Become-PollWorker>

City of Appleton Municipal Clerk contact, Kami Lynch: <https://www.appleton.org/government/city-clerk/contact-us>