

THE INFORMED VOTER

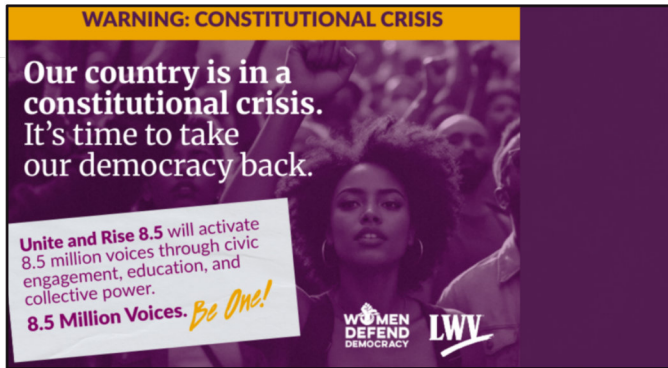
www.lwvappletonfoxcities.org • PO Box 1281, Appleton, WI 54912 • 920.738.7766

• Empowering Voters
• Defending Democracy

AUGUST 2025



President's Message: Power Mapping Our Skills



Wondering what the League of Women Voters is doing to defend democracy and human rights — when so much is in danger? The answer is **Unite & Rise 8.5**. This initiative started in May 2025 and joins all levels of the League to mobilize **8.5 million voters nationwide** to oppose the threats to our rights, our rule of law, and the balance of power.

The Four Pillars of Unite & Rise 8.5

1. Legal & Policy Advocacy: Challenge unconstitutional actions through litigation, advocate for electoral integrity reforms at state and federal levels, fight voter suppression, and protect due process.
2. Public Mobilization & Coalition Building: Turn out millions for quick activations and longer-planned activist campaigns, uplift local voices, and partner with grassroots, national, and international organizations.
3. Civic Education & Engagement: Launch public awareness campaigns, expand voter registration and turnout efforts, host educational forums, connect policy to real-life impact, and equip people with tools to act.
4. Democracy Resilience: Build lasting infrastructure to protect democratic values and institutions for the long haul.

What is our local League doing to make Unite & Rise successful? This month we've recruited a Unite & Rise **"League in Action"** team. Led by **Co-Captains Nancy Jones and Sue Abrahamson**, this team will meet regularly and activate using LWVWI and LWVUS Unite & Rise 8.5 playbooks. Look for their article in this newsletter.

Our local League Board met July 29 for a working retreat where we "power-mapped" those community organizations with whom we might work on this mission. We identified scores of groups and began the task of mapping our local League's personal connections.

Our goal is to return power to the people. Unite & Rise 8.5 symbolizes hope during this dark time when all three branches of our US government have been subordinated to an autocracy. Please join us by taking our [Unite & Rise member survey](#) — and let us know how you will get involved in our campaign to bring back our democratic system.

Looking forward,

Jan

president@lwvappletonfoxcities.org

Unite & Rise 8.5: Campaign Includes Democracy Practice



Submitted by Nancy Jones and Sue Abrahamson
League in Action Team Co-Chairs
action@lwwappletonfoxcities.org

The **Unite & Rise 8.5 Campaign** is the biggest mobilization of the League of Women Voters since the Women's Suffrage Movement over 100 years ago. This is an "all hands on deck" moment for members and allies, family, neighbors, and friends. The League, at every level, is curating opportunities for all of us to step up our civic engagement over the next 15 months.

Nationally, Unite & Rise 8.5 is a multifaceted campaign focusing on: **Legal & Policy Advocacy; Public Mobilization & Coalition Building; Civic Education & Engagement; and Democracy Resilience.** A series of micro-campaigns, each with a three-month duration, will keep the campaign up-to-date with new action opportunities. The current micro-campaign theme is **Holding Power Accountable**,

LWVWI's campaign will be guided by the following pillars —

1. Defend democracy and push back against rising authoritarianism and tyranny
2. Empower people to utilize their first amendment rights and stand in solidarity with those most vulnerable
3. Standing up to protect human rights including:
 - a. **Protect voting rights**
 - b. **End mass deportation and to keep families and communities together**
 - c. **Protect reproductive rights**
 - d. **Protect LGBTQ+ rights**
4. Lay the foundation for a more just democracy in Wisconsin

Locally, here are ways you can participate in **Unite & Rise 8.5** right away and on an ongoing basis:

- Let our local League leaders know how you will participate at this critical juncture for democracy in our nation by responding to our local member survey: [LWV-AFC Unite & Rise 8.5 Campaign Participation](#)
- Take **daily nonviolent action to hold power accountable** by utilizing LWVUS's [Daily Democracy Practice](#).
- Regularly check lwwappletonfoxcities.org to find Unite & Rise-related **Upcoming Events** and **Issues to Follow/ Actions to Take**.
- Reach out to Jan Quinlan, Sue Abrahamson, or Nancy Jones with your questions and ideas. Start by emailing president@lwwappletonfoxcities.org or action@lwwappletonfoxcities.org

Fair Maps: Community Hearings Inform Draft Proposal



In mid-July, Community Hearings for a Permanent Fair Maps Process were held in multiple areas to gather people's input on a long-term solution to prevent future gerrymandering beyond 2030. The hearings were held by the Wisconsin Fair Maps Coalition, which works to positively change the redistricting process in Wisconsin. Fox Cities residents were included in a session held at the Brown County Library.

- The livestream of the entire Green Bay hearing [can be viewed here](#). The closed caption option can be helpful when viewing the livestream..
- View the slides for the Green Bay hearing [HERE](#).
- The Coalition's [draft proposal](#) for an Independent Redistricting Committee, which is a living document undergoing changes depending on public input, is also available. The proposal is designed to give voters a stronger voice in the election process and the work of the Wisconsin legislature.

PROGRAMS: Step Into New Monthly Lineup with Recycling

By Jan Smith
Program Director
program@lwwappletonfoxcities.org

The League is ready to launch an exciting program year, and how better to get on our feet than a meaningful walking tour to kick things off!



On **Monday, September 8** we will be touring the Tri-County Recycling Facility in Appleton at **11:30 a.m.** **Note the different time of day.** Jordan Hiller, Recycling and Solid Waste Program Coordinator, has offered the tour overview below, and has also created two tour options to accommodate our group. The inside tour can accommodate only 19 members, requires closed toed shoes and has many stairs along the way. The second and equally informative tour is a classroom tour to ensure we can serve our group completely. The tours will take place simultaneously, and last between 45 to 90 minutes.

Get ready to see recycling in action! A tour of the Tri-County Recycling Facility in Appleton offers a behind-the-scenes look at what happens to your recyclables after they leave the curb. You'll follow the journey of paper, cardboard, plastic bottles, and cans as they move through the high-tech sorting system.

Tours begin with an overview of the recycling process and safety guidelines, then we'll head into the observation areas overlooking the main sorting floor. From there, you'll see how materials are unloaded, sorted by size and type, separated using advanced equipment like spinning discs, air jets, and optical sorters, and finally compressed into bales ready for market.

Watch for an invitation and registration details to come soon.

Along the way, you'll learn about:

- The people and machines behind the sorting process
- Common mistakes in recycling (and how to avoid them)
- What happens to the materials after they leave the facility
- How your actions at home directly impact the quality of recycling

PROGRAMS: Legislative Town Hall, DEI, Brunch Headline Fall

Your input from Lively Issues in January shaped the content of our monthly programs with you letting us know what is important to you. Therefore, you will see that the topics cover a range from Local Government, Natural Resources and Community Development.

Here is the lineup of programs from September through December.

September 8, 2025, 11:30 a.m. — Recycling: Let's Talk Trash; Tri-County Recycling Facility Anticipating that this opportunity will attract a large group, a limited number of attendees will be able to choose a tour of the actual facility, and others will be provided a classroom presentation. While stairs are involved in both sections of the tour, the classroom portion has fewer steps to manage. Watch for an invitation and registration details coming soon.

September 29, 2025, 6:30-8:00 p.m. — Legislative Town Hall VIRTUAL

October 6, 2025, 6:30-8:00 p.m. — Take in an overview of one of the League's most important national initiatives — Unite and Rise 8.5 — and how you can become engaged in this urgent call to action; Presenters League President Jan Quinlan; League in Action Co-Chairs Sue Abrahamson, Nancy Jones; Location TBD

November 3, 2025, 6:30-8:00. p.m. — Immigrants in our Community; Girl Scout Headquarters; Marc Christopher, Attny.; Lisa Cruz, Multicultural Center; Chantal Baseke, Hope and Help Together

December 13, 2025, 9:30 a.m. — 2:30 p.m. Holiday Brunch, Bubolz Nature Preserve. "Doubling Down on DEI "; Speakers Kole Torres, Jeanne Roberts. This timely and insightful program ties in beautifully to the silent auction fundraiser. As you conjur up delectable baskets, please keep Made in Wisconsin treasures and the Multi-Cultural community in mind as you Shop Local. Consider delicious delicacies, handmade items, ornaments, business gift certificates, and more.

PUBLIC SAFETY: Avoid Incarceration by Social Intervention

Submitted by April Savage and Karen Pfefferle

The Appleton-Fox Cities League of Women Voters Research Study on Public Safety is developing new advocacy positions on public safety. We are conducting research locally, to ensure we are advocating for the most impactful policy change. As promised, this is the second in our series of newsletter updates and action opportunities to keep you informed on special topics.

In July, we discussed the need to eliminate crimeless revocation and provided an opportunity to advocate through the rules process, since the governor and legislature are at an impasse over legislative solutions. This month, we would like to focus on prevention — avoiding incarceration by investing in early social intervention — specifically, how individuals can improve early literacy. (Crimeless revocation was detailed in the July issue of [The Informed Voter](#).)

Breaking the complicated cycle that leads to incarceration in a [fundamentally biased system](#) will require complex action. Your talents are needed. Read on to learn more.

What can be done?

Take Action — The Appleton Area School District provides a great opportunity for individuals to make a difference by volunteering with the United For Reading Success (UFRS)

- High-quality and well-structured volunteer reading program for our youngest students
- Encourage children to enjoy books, support their efforts to learn to read, and to celebrate their successes
- Aligned with AASD's reading curriculum and instruction and is intended to build confidence and create lifelong readers and learners
- Includes all AASD elementary schools

Click here to learn more and apply to volunteer: <https://www.aasd.k12.wi.us/district/connect-with-aasd/community-engagement/volunteer-in-the-aasd>

Get smart — read on for the why and see below for further reading.

Get organized — get involved in community organizations working in this space (listed below), including our Public Safety Study.

So why is improving literacy important?

Literacy is a social justice/civil rights issue. If illiteracy were a public health issue, it would be considered an epidemic. Unlike cancer, illiteracy is solvable and we have the cure. It is the foundational tool on which all other essential skills are built. If we shared the tool of literacy equitably, and effectively, we could break the harsh social cycle of crime. Learn more from John Triscitti, Texas Library Association's 2014 Librarian of the Year, in his Ted Talk [here](#). According to [JJ Parker](#), a reading partner coordinator in New York, prioritizing reading proficiency for elementary school students, especially black and brown students, is one of the most important ways we can fight for social justice, equality, and equity for future generations.

Connection between literacy and incarceration

When adequate support does not exist for students who get left behind by a system that has been failing them in reading for decades, we doom many students to a school to prison pipeline.

- According to the National Assessment of Adult Literacy, 2/3 of students who cannot read proficiently by the end of the fourth grade will end up in jail or on welfare.
- 85% of all juveniles who interface with the juvenile court system are functionally low literate.
- Students who drop out of high school are 5 times more likely than high school graduates to be arrested in their lifetime.
- Students who drop out of high school are 63% more likely to be incarcerated than their peers with four-year college degrees.

<https://readingpartners.org/blog/literacy-support-can-reduce-incarceration-rates/>

Further reading

- ACLU-BluePrint for Smart Justice Wisconsin- <https://50stateblueprint.aclu.org/assets/reports/SJ-Blueprint-WI.pdf>
- The Sentencing Project- Ending Mass Incarceration: Social Interventions that Work
- <https://www.sentencingproject.org/app/uploads/2022/08/Ending-Mass-Incarceration-Social-Interventions-That-Work.pdf>
- Ted Talk-Literacy Is The Answer- John Triscitti -TedxACU <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z-h-BhcV7DM>
- Access to High Quality Literacy Support Can Reduce Incarceration Rates <https://readingpartners.org/blog/literacy-support-can-reduce-incarceration-rates/>

Community organizations

- ESTHER- <https://esther-foxvalley.org/>
- WISDOM <https://wisdomwisconsin.org/>
- EXPO of WI- <https://expowisconsin.org/>
- Criminal Justice Project/ WI Examiner <https://wisconsinexaminer.com/tag/criminal-justice-project/>
- Dream.Org- <https://dream.org/justice/>

VOTER SERVICE: Busy Tabling Schedule Results in Connections

By Jacqui Klimaszewski
Voter Services Vice President
voterservice@lwvappletonfoxcities.org

Voter Services had a very productive June and July!

- Juneteenth — June 7; 1:00-4:00 p.m. The event was in the Fox Cities Exhibition Center this year. Timber Smith and fellows from his fraternity joined us.
- Fox Valley Pride — June 21; 10:30 a.m.-6:00 p.m.
- Summer Farm Markets — June 28 and July 26;
- Celebrate Diversity Picnic — July 19; 10:30 a.m.-2:00 p.m.;

These events required 79 volunteer hours and resulted in providing information to 75 voters, giving out 23 magnetic bumper stickers and 87 Future Voter Stickers. Interactions included 315 spins on the Civics Game wheel, and 37 interested members who were given membership information.



Camden and Calliope won at the Civics Game--with a little assist from their mom and dad. League Membership Director Linda Bjella hosted the contest.

Upcoming Voter Services Events—Mark Your Calendar!

- Farm Market – August 23; in conjunction with the Women’s Action Coalition "Women's Equality Day" activities; Houdini Plaza, Downtown Appleton
- LatinoFest – September 6; Pierce Park
- World Peace Day – September 13; Pierce Park

The week of September 15 will feature National Voter Registration Day events. Please contact me if you have any possible locations where the League could offer voter registration assistance:

voterservice@lwvappletonfoxcities.org

VOTER SERVICE: Birthday Cards Invite 18 Year Olds to Plan to Vote



By Jacqui Klimaszewski
Voter Services Vice President
voterservice@lwvappletonfoxcities.org

Last year LWV Appleton-Fox Cities connected with the Appleton Area School District to distribute “Birthday Cards” to Seniors as they turned 18. Students turn 18 all through the school year and become eligible to vote. The cards encourage them to register to vote via the QR code that takes them to myvote.wi.gov website. The cards are handed out at each AASD high school during their home room (flex/ advisory) time. The cards include the dates of upcoming elections.

Special thanks to Kelly Leopold, AASD 7-12 Director of ELA, Social Studies and World Language, for helping us organize this.

**** If you have a connection with a Fox Cities high school and think this would be a program they would like to participate in to help students register to vote, please contact me at voterservice@lwvappletonfoxcities.org**

NEW MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

WELCOME TO THE LEAGUE!

By Linda Bjella
Membership Director
membership@lwvappletonfoxcities.org

Our membership continues to grow and now stands at 160! People seem to be looking for ways to get involved in a growing resistance to the radical changes occurring in our country. What better place than through the League, with its more than century-long tradition of nonpartisanship and dedication to defending democracy and empowering voters? Here's a short profile of our newest members:

Shirley Senarighi joined our League in late June. She has a long history with LWV and served on the board of the Door County League. Most recently, she was also a member of the Dane County League. Shirley is a retired educator who worked as an elementary guidance counselor and principal in Sturgeon Bay. She now lives in Grand Chute.

In July, we welcomed Sue Meyer. Sue is new to the League and to the Fox Cities. She is retired, lives in Kimberly, and moved here from Marshfield where she worked as a nurse.

Welcome Shirley and Sue!!

DEI BOOK SHARE: Group Makes Selections for Upcoming Months

By Kathie Kinnaman
DEI Director
dei@lwvappletonfoxcities.org

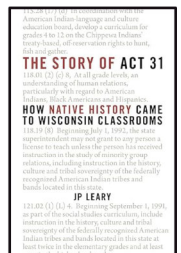
Attendees at the DEI Book Share are an impressive group. We have a member who accidentally came an hour early but stuck around to participate. We have a member who did not read the book but came for the stimulating discussion.

Here are our selections for reading and discussion in August and coming months. Feel welcome to join us even if you have not read the books. The discussions are lively and informative.



August
Great Black Hope, by a novel Rob Franklin
Wednesday, August 27
6 p.m. (Central Standard Time) at Mondo's by the River

September and October
We want to read **The Summer of our Discontent** (thank you Linda for the suggestion) but it doesn't come out until September 5. So that will be **for October**. For **September** we will read **The Story of Act 31: How Native History Came to Wisconsin Classrooms** by **J. P. Leary**. It came out in 2018 so it should be easier to get. Thank you for the suggestion, Donna!



VOTING RIGHTS: Appleton Mayor Honors Safe, Accessible Voting

Celebration of the 60th Anniversary of the 1965 Voting Rights Act on August 6 took many forms. At the Capitol in Madison, LWVUS President Dianna Wynn held up League's steadfast allegiance to voting rights at a rally hosted by the state League. At Appleton's City Hall, Mayor Jake Woodford read this proclamation honoring our own community's commitment to fair, secure, and accessible elections and voting rights for all.

PROCLAMATION



Office of the Mayor

Whereas, on August 6, 1965 President Lyndon B Johnson signed the Voting Rights Act of 1965 into law.

Whereas, the right to vote is a key building block of democracy ensuring that every U.S. citizen is given the right to help shape our country's future; and

Whereas, the City of Appleton acknowledges the extensive contributions of the many ordinary citizens who fought valiantly to end all race-based restrictions to the franchise. These include Appletonian Jim Zwerg who in 1961 traveled to Montgomery, Alabama, alongside Black activists including John Lewis, and was brutally attacked at the bus terminal; and

Whereas, Appleton civic groups like the League of Women Voters, American Association of University Women, Women's Action Coalition and others have persistently championed voter access through legal education initiatives, voter education drives, and on-the-ground registration efforts; and

Whereas, all residents are called upon to honor the spirit of the Voting Rights Act by registering to vote, engaging in the democratic process and advocating for the protection of voting rights for all; and

Whereas, the City of Appleton reaffirms its commitment to eliminating barriers to voting for all its citizens and reaffirms its commitment to promoting fair, secure and accessible elections.

Now therefore I, Jacob A. Woodford, Mayor of the City of Appleton, do hereby proclaim August 6, 2025, as the

Voting Rights Act Day

in the City of Appleton, and encourage all residents to honor this historic milestone by exercising their right to vote.



Signed and sealed this 1st day of August 2025.


JACOB A. WOODFORD
MAYOR OF APPLETON

Proc: 46-316

WOMEN'S EQUALITY: Share Your Story at August 23 Farm Market



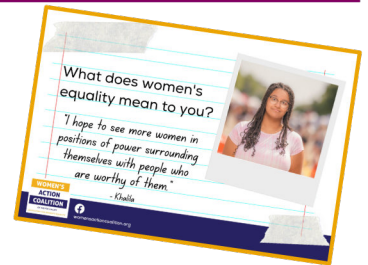
Join us!

Women's Equality Day Celebration

Saturday, August 23, 2025

Houdini Plaza, Appleton Farmers Market

8:00 a.m.-12:30 p.m.



Join our sister organizations of the **Women's Action Coalition of the Fox Valley Region** to highlight Women's Equality Day and its importance to us all.

The League of Women Voters will be registering voters, and other volunteers will be taking polaroid pictures of people who stop by and share their thoughts about equality by writing down their thoughts. We will be sharing the plaza with a local authors' group, so you can enjoy that as well!

It will be a time to reflect on what the day means both historically and now. Stop in for a visit or to help and support the Women's Action Coalition! Either way, we would love to see you !

2025 HOLIDAY BRUNCH: Think 'Made in Wisconsin,' 'Shop Local'

LWV LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF APPLETON-FOX CITIES

Holiday Brunch

SILENT AUCTION

START MAKING YOUR LIST WITH "MADE IN WISCONSIN" ITEMS FOR THIS ANNUAL LEAGUE FUNDRAISER. THEN "SHOP LOCAL!" CONSIDER ITEMS THAT REFLECT YOUR HERITAGE, OR THE SPIRIT OF OUR COMMUNITY.

This year's bidding will start earlier, and be open for a shorter time, so get in the holiday spirit now to dream up items sure to be on everyone's wish list.

Mark your calendar for the Holiday Brunch
 Saturday, December 13, 2025 • Bubolz Nature Preserve, Grand Chute