

People Power Summer — Meeting the Moment

LET'S DO SOMETHING.

by Jan Quinlan, President

Last month, Linda Bjella, Sue Abrahamson, and I met with the “Let’s Do Something” Waupaca group to talk about the many ways the League of Women Voters takes action. In this extraordinary time, *doing something* is not only therapeutic — it is essential. You cannot just sit by.

While I realize that for many of our members I am “preaching to the choir,” if you are looking to do something that makes a difference this summer, consider these possibilities:

Engage 5 to 10

Think of **5 to 10 friends, family members, or neighbors** who don’t usually vote during the midterm elections or are new voters. **Be their voting mentor.** Reach out to connect the dots between voting in the midterms — and what’s happening in our nation right now. The war. Gas prices. Loss of our rights. If they have an issue, they can have a voice at the polls. Be sure they’re registered at myvote.wi.gov and then follow up closer to the election to **help them make their plan to vote.** See page 4 People Power Summer for details.

Show Up for Your Neighbors

On **Tuesday May 26** League members will gather at the **First Congregational UCC Church** with participants of **Palm Sunday Path** to learn about SNAP/Food Share programs and how HR1 (that big federal budget bill) will affect those who receive benefits. **Jerry Iverson, a former County Supervisor,** will provide an overview of County Government including how HR1 will impact Medicaid, long term care, and mental health services in our own community. [Click here to register for that program.](#)

Volunteer

Volunteer with the League. Thanks to our Arts and Visibility team, we will be hosting **“We the People” gatherings** at the **History Museum** front lawn during **Saturday morning Farmers Markets** — and marching in the **May 25 Memorial Day** and **June 13 Flag Day Parades.** To join us, just respond to our SignUp Genius emails when you receive them. If you’re brand new, we will pair you with an experienced volunteer. See page 5 Opportunities to Help for more details.

While we endeavor together, we can take time to celebrate the Arts and Community. Look for many more opportunities to **“do something”** in this newsletter, like attending an award-winning art exhibit, dining at a local underrepresented restaurant, or gathering with friends to discuss Goodreads.

We the People do Make a Difference! Read on.

Forward,





Referendum Would Eliminate Past Equity-Based Gains

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“ Lower voter participation is a silent threat to our democracy it under-represents young people, the poor, the disabled, those with little education, minorities and you and me. ”

— Nancy Neuman, Writer

WI CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT ON NOVEMBER 3, 2026 MIDTERM BALLOT

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THIS REFERENDUM/AMENDMENT: GOVERNMENTAL ENTITY DISCRIMINATION PROHIBITED *“Shall section 27 of article 1 of the constitution be created to prohibit governmental entity in the state from discriminating against, or granting preferential treatment to, any individual or group on the basis of race, sex, color, ethnicity, or national origin in public employment, public education public contracting, or public administration?”*

PLAIN MEANING OF THE CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT The title and the first part of this administration lead voters to believe that Wisconsin's government cannot discriminate against individuals: Everyone is treated equally. This language is intentionally deceptive since federal law already mandates that governmental discrimination is unconstitutional.

So, what is the point of this amendment? The second sentence is the reason this amendment is on our ballots. **It prohibits the state from granting “preferential treatment” to marginalized people.** If this amendment passes, it will eliminate all the equity-based gains Wisconsin has made over the 50 years.

While framed as promoting equality and fairness, AJR 102/SJR 94 would reduce Wisconsin's state capacity to address long-standing disparities. It would eliminate public systems of tools essential for promoting equal opportunity and equitable access to the **underserved and vulnerable in our society.**

IMPACT IF THIS AMENDMENT PASSES

State and local government programs that allow equal opportunity to succeed will be unconstitutional, eliminating all efforts to address widespread inequality.

Who will benefit: White, able, male, US citizens

What will we lose: 50 years of gains for women, minorities and marginalized communities

Programs and Policies that this amendment will eliminate:

- **Health Equity:** WI's overall racial health equity grade is currently a “D” with higher rates of chronic illness, disease, maternal mortality for Black women.
- **Education:** Changes to K-12 accommodations, curriculum; changes to UW admissions, scholarships, grants, courses, textbooks.
- **Community-Action Programs:** Elimination of programs that assist low-income people to reduce poverty, housing, food insecurity, Headstart, social programs.
- **Business/Employment:** Elimination of workplace initiatives for women and minority-owned businesses, targeting hiring strategies, promotions; Wisconsin Supplier Diversity Program.
- **State contracts:** for funding equity-based programs
- **ADRCs (Aging, Disability Resource Centers)** may possibly be made unconstitutional

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Upcoming Events
Fair Maps, Juneteenth, DMV Voter Registration



JUNE 4 - STAND UP FOR FAIR MAPS

The **Fair Maps Coalition** and other concerned organizations are leading a coordinated statewide "FairMaps for Good" day of action that will take place just days after the signature filing deadline for candidates in the upcoming election. The intent is to send a message to the candidates to support an Independent Redistricting Commission (IRC) to end gerrymandering in Wisconsin.

Wisconsin currently has fair state-level voting maps, but we need a PROCESS in place ahead of the 2030 Census. That's why Fair Maps is hosting community presentations across the state to build momentum for an Independent Redistricting Commission (IRC).

An IRC takes map-drawing out of politicians' hands and puts it in the hands of the people.

In the Fox Cities, the Coalition is being joined by the **League of Women Voters of Appleton-Fox Cities, Fox Valley Indivisible** and other organizations to lead a "Stand Up for Fair Maps" rally on Thursday, June 4, at 5:30 p.m. in downtown Appleton's Houdini Plaza. The date was chosen so that the rally message can be addressed to the candidates who will be seeking seats in the state legislature. More details of the day of action can be found online at www.fairmapswi.com/events

For the past year, the Wisconsin Fair Maps Coalition has been presenting a draft proposal for an Independent Redistricting Commission, gaining public input and informing Wisconsinites.

"It's time to let current and potential legislators know that their constituents want their voices and their votes to count equally," says **Penny Bernard Schaber**, former state legislator and member of the Coalition. *"Fair maps will make that happen and will ensure that voters choose their legislators."*

JUNE 7 - JUNETEENTH



We have learned that **Juneteenth** will be **Sunday, June 7 from 12:30-3:00 p.m.** Watch for more details as they become available.

JULY 6-22 - DMV VOTER REGISTRATION EVENT



REMINDER!
In July, Jann Dreier will be DMV project coordinator

Please mark your calendars for the next **DMV event** — **July 6-22** ahead of the **August 11 Partisan Primary**.

Sign-Up Genius Link:
<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0B44ADA-B2FA6FCC07-64023449-dmvvoter>



Showing Up for Neighbors

How the Big Budget Bill (HR1) Will Affect Our Fox Cities Community



WE ARE STRONGER TOGETHER

Are you wondering exactly how H.R. 1 (The Big Budget Bill) will affect our Fox Cities community? Do you know how county government impacts our daily lives? (Hint: it is much more than our federal government!)

Come share a meal with fellow League members and participants from **Palm Sunday Path**.

Join us for a conversation about how county government works, why it matters, and how we can show up for our neighbors through informed and engaged citizenship.

Program to Follow:

- Introduction to County Government
- H.R. 1's Impact on SNAP Nutritional Benefits and Badger Care Insurance
- Next Steps for Advocacy

Come listen, learn, and be part of an important conversation that goes beyond protests. Together we can make a difference working with our neighbors. Meal registration closes on May 23.



[Click the graphic above or here to register.](#)



A Matter of Fact: We Do Make a Difference

Sue Abrahamson
Unite & Rise Co-Chair

"Bad officials are elected by good citizens who do not vote."
- George Jean Nathan, American editor and drama critic

ARE WE REALLY MAKING A DIFFERENCE?



It's a question many of us ask as we work to protect and strengthen our democracy. Here's one small but powerful story that says yes. On April 1st (no fooling!), I presented to 120 high school seniors at **Waupaca High School**. My presentation covered the essentials —**why voting matters, how to register, what to bring, how to make a voting plan, and what to expect at the polls**. The students were attentive, respectful, and genuinely engaged.

On **Election Day**, I served as **Chief Inspector for the Town of Waupaca**, which has approximately 800 registered voters. Among those who came to the polls were five seniors who had attended my presentation and chose to register and vote that very day. And there's more: one of those students brought along his parents—who had never voted before.

Moments like these remind us that our efforts matter. **Education leads to action, and action strengthens democracy. We do make a difference.**



People Power Summer

Nancy Jones
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POWER PLAYBOOK 5 – MAY-JULY RELATIONAL VOTER PROGRAM (RVP)

The current Unite & Rise 8.5 micro-campaign is **"People Power Summer**, (which) continues our work around election preparation while highlighting the many ways individuals and communities can vote for an inclusive democracy. Activities will also connect to the **250th Anniversary of the US Declaration of Independence**, and prepare Leagues for a nationwide **Day of Action on August 8**, marking the anniversary of the Voting Rights Act and connecting its legacy to the battles we are fighting today."

LWVUS is characterizing this summer as "a time to accelerate, continue, deepen, and expand the core work that drives voter participation: registration, education, engagement, and turnout, and strengthen our reach and impact in our community. Each interaction with a voter — whether through a registration drive, a candidate forum, or a community conversation — is an opportunity not only to support participation in the primary, but also to invite deeper involvement in the work ahead."

Research indicates that adding friend-to-friend contact to traditional Get Out the Vote (GOTV) is a promising way to turn out more voters and increase civic engagement. **LWV-AFC is asking every member to identify 5-10 individuals in your own circles and networks that may be low propensity/high opportunity voters.** Over the coming months, you will be asked to reach out to them with election preparation and reminders. Contact method is flexible—text, email, phone call, or a casual face-to-face conversation. **Your participation in our League's Relational Voter Program will play an important part in a mass mobilization for the November general election.**

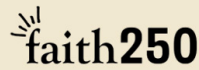
READ MORE ABOUT RELATIONAL VOTING

Sign up for RVP at the annual meeting or on the League website.

[1. The True Effect of Relational Organizing](#)

[2. Building Our Future: Relational Organizing For Student Voter Turnout](#)

THE 250th ANNIVERSARY OF THE US DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE



LWVUS is encouraging the following themes:

- Commemorate with Honesty** - grounding our work in the founding aspirations
- Recognize the Expanders** - those in every generation who fought to make the Declaration's promises real
- Building an Inclusive Democracy Together**

In our area, the WI Voting Rights Coalition partner, Wisconsin Interfaith Voter Engagement Campaign (WIVEC), is hosting Appleton Faith 250 events to discuss four "American sacred texts," in an interfaith/community-wide setting.

The national Faith 250 project offers an opportunity for clarifying our shared civic values, and celebrating our hopes for America. The selected texts are The Declaration of Independence, Emma Lazarus's The New Colossus, America the Beautiful, and Frederick Douglass's address, What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?

JOIN FAITH 250:
A MULTIFAITH JOURNEY
THROUGH AMERICA'S
FOUNDING TEXTS



Gather. Learn. Reflect.

Tuesdays June 23 & June 30, 6:30-8:30 PM CT



Join virtually
Register via Zoom

Join in-person
Prince of Peace Lutheran Church
2330 E. Calumet St
Appleton, WI

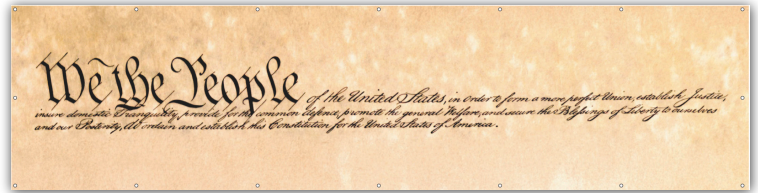


Mark your calendars for the evenings of June 23 and June 30 for conversations and summertime treats, and July 7 for a celebratory dinner. ESTHER is a co-sponsor, and the events are slated to be held at Prince of Peace Lutheran Church, 2330 E. Calumet St. with a virtual option.



Opportunities to Play a Role

By Kim Schiedermayer
Chair, Arts & Visibility Comm



ARTS & VISIBILITY COMMITTEE

League members, friends and family have lots of opportunities to **"do something"** this summer as we sprint to the midterms. **The Arts & Visibility committee** is asking you to **volunteer and help fill the ranks in two Appleton parades**. The **Appleton Memorial Day Parade** (2 mi) is **Monday, May 25th, at 8:30 a.m.** from downtown Appleton to Riverside Cemetery. The **Appleton Flag Day Parade** is at **1:30 p.m. Saturday, June 13**, for one mile down College Ave.

We're looking for **sign carriers, banner carriers, flag holders, a veteran from each branch**, and walking flag wavers for both parades. **Ask your friends, nieces or grandchildren (future voters) to join us**. Details including dress code, gathering time and place, and spots to sign up for both parades will be coming soon!

The League is also hosting **'Constitution Square' on the History Museum at the Castle lawn every Saturday in June, July, and August (except Flag Day, June 13)**. Activities include a large banner of the Preamble folks can sign, a walk through the garden of Rights & Freedoms given by the Constitution, games, crafts, voter registration assistance, music, and more. **Sign up for one Saturday or more. Bring a friend or kid or young person along to help, too. Time: 9 a.m. to 12 noon.**



Trout Museum of Art Exhibit Honored

"A Creative Place: Art from Northeastern Wisconsin, 1940 to the Present (2025)"

GUEST CURATOR ANNEMARIE SAWKINS

The League extends congratulations to **Annemarie Sawkins** of the **Trout Museum of Art**, who curated an exhibit being recognized with a 2026 Wisconsin Visual Art Achievement Award co-sponsored by the Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts & Letters.

"A Creative Place: Art from Northeastern Wisconsin, 1940 to the Present (2025)" is the recipient of an Exhibition Award in the biennial awards program.

Award recipients will be recognized at a celebration at the **Museum of Wisconsin Art, West Bend**, on **May 31**.
<https://troutmuseumart.org/>



VOTER SERVICES

How Students and the League Registered Over 80 New Voters

By Jacqui Klimaszewski
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INTERVIEW WITH BRIAN KURTH, SOCIAL STUDIES TEACHER, APPLETON EAST

Our League has regularly been in the **AASD high schools** providing voter registration assistance, particularly ahead of elections. This has met with varying degrees of success as staff and students change from year to year. We know that effective models include a high degree of student involvement and we have been working toward a type of engagement that the schools organize yearly.

Brian Kurth, Social Studies teacher at **Appleton East**, has taken this vision and made it a reality at East. Mr. Kurth and his students registered 86 students in March before the Spring election. Our League would like to recognize his hard work and commitment to paving the pathway for his students to become voters. It is also our goal to promote his efforts so this model will be an inspiration for other schools and teachers. Mr. Kurth was gracious enough to respond to some interview questions regarding his work this year.

You have conducted extremely effective voter registration assistance events engaging students in your class/school. How did you get started with this project?

During the 2024–25 school year, I was contacted by the League of Women Voters about a voter registration drive. I asked my AP Government students if they would be interested in getting involved, and several were more than willing to help. The students and I met with a representative from the local League of Women Voters and discussed the best ways to increase voter registration among our student population.

The representative, Brian Post, explained that in past years they would set up in the library after an announcement, and students could voluntarily come down to register. However, that strategy did not yield many registrations. My students and I suggested a different approach: first, communicate with 12th-grade advisories (homerooms) to remind students to bring their Wisconsin IDs or driver's licenses the following week. Then, the next step was to have my volunteer students visit the 12th-grade advisories and guide eligible students (those who were 18 and had their IDs) through the online registration process.

How do you motivate students to get involved? The 6–8 volunteers I worked with were already politically motivated. It also helped that I had built relationships with them by teaching them in AP U.S. History the previous year and then again in AP Government.

I handled much of the initial coordination by contacting colleagues who teach senior advisories to remind students to bring their IDs. The students and I then divided responsibilities, assigning volunteers to specific advisories, typically in teams of two covering 2–3 advisories each.

We also used laminated cards from the League of Women Voters that outlined the online registration process. Finally, we

created a fun group name and digital poster that connected our school mascot to the effort: "Patriot Voter Project."

What has been their reaction to taking a leadership role in helping students register?

Very positive. While all of the volunteers had participated in community service through National Honor Society, this was their first time being directly involved in the political and electoral process.

They reported receiving positive feedback from senior advisory teachers, and they were motivated to register as many of their peers as possible. As a side note, having volunteers report how many students they registered, and then sharing that information with the League, served as a positive nudge and a kind of commitment device. It encouraged them to make a strong pitch to their peers.

What's something that these students do that inspires you? The motivation they have to not only work hard to set themselves up for success but also how much they give back to their school and community. Having known these students for two years, and now seeing them prepare to leave for college, I've been impressed by how aware they are of national and global issues and how those issues affect their lives.

They understand that, in many ways, the deck is increasingly stacked against them, whether in terms of college costs, high cost of living, or rapid economic changes that will impact their careers. Despite that, they continue to push forward and strive to improve both their own futures and their communities.

What's one amusing story you have from this effort? This might depend on your sense of humor, but last school year (the first year of the registration drive) when the volunteers and I were trying to come up with a name for the registration project, one

student suggested something along the lines of "10,000 votes" or "I need 10,000 votes", which was a dark humor play on President Donald Trump's phone call to the Georgia governor after the 2020 election when Trump was trying to get the governor of Georgia to change the election results in his state. I said, "no". As I mentioned, my students are very politically aware for high school seniors and, being teenagers, they also like to test where the boundaries of acceptable ideas and behavior are.

What role has the League played in helping with this project? The League's biggest contributions were reaching out to the school and to me with the opportunity, and providing clear, easy-to-follow registration materials.

What suggestions do you have for the League to get this type of student engagement project growing in other schools? I would suggest identifying and contacting either a strong, community service oriented extracurricular group such as National Honor Society, Key Club, or Student Council or if the school has a senior-level AP Government course, contacting the teacher of that course. From there, it's important to allow the teacher or advisor to determine how best to implement the effort. Every school operates a bit differently.

At Appleton East, using AP Government seniors during advisory periods worked well. Other schools may have different structures or opportunities.

Overall, the key is finding a motivated teacher or club advisor and then letting them handle the logistics. They will know what works best in their building and how to maximize the impact of the voter registration drive.



All Eyes on the Amendment

Kathie Kinnaman
Diversity, Equity, and
Inclusion Director
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FOCUS ON FALL 2026 CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT

The DEI Committee held the April meeting at **Wilder's Bistro**, where we again discussed our list of restaurants owned by under-represented people, which continues to grow. Restaurants from this list will be shared in this newsletter, and we will try to continue meeting at restaurants that have sufficient space for us.

The committee decided its next focus will be on the **constitutional amendment (Fall 2026)** to eliminate DEI efforts in local and state governments. Our first step is to learn whatever we can about these efforts and then to educate the public. We began on May 5 with a zoom meeting with **Joan Schwarz** of **LWV Wisconsin**. There will also be a League program on this referendum in **October**.

On **June 29**, we are scheduled to make and serve dinner for **Pillars**. So far, there are eight of us who have volunteered, but we can always use more! We'll make detailed plans at our **June 2** meeting.

DEI FRIENDLY RESTAURANTS/SHOPS



Appleton Asian Market - Big Belly Deli (1828 W. Wisconsin Avenue, Appleton) - everything you need to cook your own Asian foods!



Little Siam (208 W. Wisconsin Avenue, Neenah) - chef born in Thailand makes great curry.

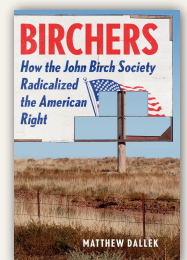
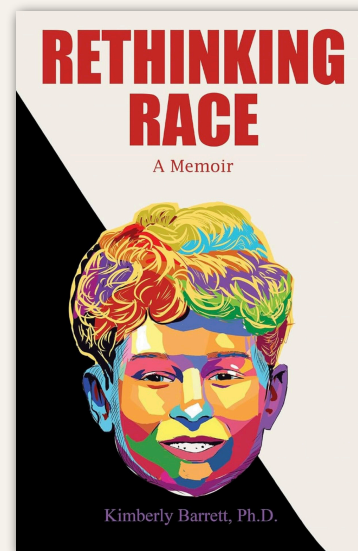
BOOK SHARE NEWS

The **DEI Book Share** convened twice in April. We had a guided tour of **Tiny House Village** on April 16 as a follow-up to our discussion of **There Is No Place for Us Here: Working and Homeless in America**, by **Brian Goldstone**. It was fascinating to hear about what they are doing and it truly had an impact on all of us there. If you'd like to hear about this program, because it really is more than just providing tiny homes, ask **Linda Bjella, Sue Abrahamson, Kathie Kinnaman, or Patti Clark-Stojke**.

Next we met on **Wednesday, April 22 at 6 p.m.** at **Xe54 Wine Bar**. We discussed **Birchers: How the John Birch Society Radicalized the American Right** by **Matthew Dallek**. Lots of Wisconsin connections in this book!

On **Wednesday, May 20** we will meet at **Seth's** in **Little Chute**. We had trouble coming to a consensus for our topic, so we're all going to listen to whatever podcast we chose or read whatever article we chose. Then, at Seth's, we will have coffee and share what we learned, what we liked and didn't like, and maybe have some recommendations for the group.

Click a book to explore



For **June, (Wednesday, June 24)** we will read and discuss the book **Rethinking Race**, by **Kimberly Barrett**.



Shining a Light on Membership

Linda Bjella
Membership Director
membership@lwvappletonfoxcities.org



WELCOME, SURVEY, RENEWAL, & AFTERGLOW

We extend a warm welcome to three new members who joined this past month: **Carol Elvery** from **Waupaca**, **Janet Bransfield** from **Chicago**, and **Mary Sue Voights** from **Appleton**. We look forward to getting to know each of you and hope you will find many opportunities to connect, learn, and make a meaningful impact with the **Appleton-Fox Cities League of Women Voters**. Each new member adds an important voice and helps our League grow its power influence in strengthening our democracy. Welcome all!

We would like to better connect all our members to the important work that our League does in the community, so we have developed a new **Engagement Survey**. We will inaugurate it at our **Annual Meeting on May 21** and will send it out to all members shortly after. We hope everyone will complete this soon. It will help us gather important information for our advocacy work as well as get members more involved according to individual skills and interests. It will only take about 5 minutes of your time!

If your membership is due to renew, you should have received an email from **LWV US**. Those reminders are sent out 60 days in advance of your renewal date. A second reminder is sent 30 days later. Once your membership reaches an expiration date, you are kept on the roster for another 45 days. If you think you need to renew your membership but haven't done so yet, please check the LWV US database at portal.lwv.org.

A special invitation was sent to all newer members to join us for an **"Afterglow"** event following our **Annual Meeting on May 21**. We will gather at **Holidays Pub & Grill** on North Richmond St. in Appleton to continue good fellowship and conversation over some light appetizers and drinks. Each attendee will receive a coupon good for one glass of beer or wine. All are welcome!



Program Topics Reflect Lively Issues

Jan Smith
Program Director
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GRACE, ACTIVISM, & ENGAGEMENT

Let me begin by thanking each and every member for your graciousness, your activism, your engagement and your collective knowledge. I navigated this new territory two years or more ago when I joined the Board of Directors reluctantly with concerns about the depth of my understanding of the organization.

Since then, it has been such a pleasure working with the members and the resources you hold within your grasp. You have been an asset to me and certainly continue to be an asset to the organization. I hope to continue my involvement in some capacity when I am able.



Pheonah Kisembo, Chantal Baseke



Jean Janes, Richard Rabe

The upcoming program year will reflect as much as the current needs of our democratic climate and the desired program options put forward at Lively issues. You can be assured your voices were heard and thoughtful program teams will put together a calendar of speakers reflective of these. The large topics include: **opportunities to meet your legislators; constitutional amendment information; education funding; investigations of AI; the annual social events; planning through Lively Issues and Rights of Nature.**

If there is any area you feel drawn toward and have an interest in being part of a planning team, your assistance and interest is always welcomed. Please reach out to Program@lwvappletonfoxcities.org. Thank you very much for the opportunity to serve you.