

THE
Leaguer

FALL 2021

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT



Our Mission...

The League of Women Voters of Ashland & Bayfield Counties (LWV/ABC) is a nonpartisan political organization whose main objective is to promote political responsibility through the informed and active participation of all in government at all levels, especially locally.

PO Box 175

Ashland, WI 54806

info@lwwabcwi.org



CIVIC ENGAGEMENT...

May sound like a vague concept, but it is a basic act that sustains our democracy. Civic engagement is individuals working together to promote positive change in communities. This powerful concept is what our founders meant by “we the people”; citizens charged with

the responsibility of protecting self-government with the right to vote as the vehicle of that power.

Many of us may feel overwhelmed by the multiple challenges of epidemic disease, climate change, and threats to our democratic process. Our hope is that maintaining the ethic of “the common good” will dispel all attempts to dismantle voting rights, energize citizens to care about our planet, and recognize that strength comes through unity, not fear.

The committee on civic engagement has joined with our other action committees (economic inequality, voter services, and natural resources) to identify and plan activities to: 1) address climate change and 2) protect democratic processes. It is clear that these issues are connected, affect most other aspects of government and society, and must be addressed locally and globally. For example, the increasing severity of weather extremes will have a greater effect on the poor, and tax economic resources of all nations. Voter suppression tends to enhance the political power of the few, to the detriment of minorities and economically disadvantaged. Civic engagement means staying alert to the actions of local and

Civic Engagement cont. on pg. 7

HIGHLIGHTS

- 1 **Civic Engagement**
- 2-3 **A Message from our President**
- 4 **LWV/ABC Calendar**
- 5 **Protect Your Right To Vote!**
- 6 **2021 Board & Committee Members**
- 7 **Fall Membership Meeting on October 4th**
- 8 **Economic Inequality Action Committee**
- 9 **Natural Resources Advocacy Committee**
- 10 **Economic Inequality Action Committee (cont.)**
- 11-12 **Voter Services Committee**



Legion Park in Washburn



Greetings from our President

Sue Niemi
President

president@lwvabcwi.org

Dear Members,

It's hard to believe that it's already been a year since we were in full swing to ensure as many voters were registered and able to vote safely in the November Presidential election. The work our Voter Services Committee completed over this past year is mind-boggling. Through their efforts, we ensured we got as many people registered and voting as possible in our communities. In addition to Voter Services, all of our committees worked endlessly and diligently this past year. I encourage you to review the committee reports and if something interests you, please contact the Committee Chair.

Last year as I wrote the President's message, I remember thinking maybe next year we'll be past this pandemic or at least

well on our way. Well, a lot of Americans are vaccinated now, but still not enough. People are still fighting over mask mandates and vaccine mandates. In fact, there seems to be a lot of fighting going on all over.

Over the past year we have seen a lot of changes too. This includes a change in administration at the highest level of our government and the majority in the Senate. Despite the changes, the nation is still not settled and public trust is compromised. On January 6th, 2021, we witnessed an attack on the United States Capitol. Many of us watched in horror and disbelief as this insurrection occurred within the United States. We see, almost on a daily basis, acts of

disrespect, antagonism, sexism, and racism by lawmakers we believed were voted into office to uphold the values of our nation and our constitution. We have been facing an assault on our democracy at all levels of government and between citizens, which makes the work of the League of Women Voters even more important. We Make Democracy Work. While we support activism, the right to free speech, and all of the rights and responsibilities of citizens of the United States of America, we do not condone violence against our government or our citizens.

In another twist against our democracy, we have a roughly 6-week abortion ban in Texas, which the United States Supreme Court refused to block. This law is particularly disturbing as it **"essentially delegated enforcement of that prohibition to the populace at large"**, according to Chief Justice Roberts. Per the League of Women Voters of the US' statement: By refusing to rule on Texas's near-ban on abortions, the Supreme Court allows a horrific,

anti-woman law to take effect in the state. Not only does this law essentially ban abortion services, but it opens up service providers to unjust lawsuits by private citizens simply for doing their job. In response to this action, League of Women Voters of the United States Board President **Dr. Deborah Ann Turner** and League of Women Voters of Texas President **Grace Chimene** issued the following joint statement in response:

you doing? And that is when I decided to join the League and started doing something. I know you have your own reason for joining the League and I want to personally thank you and hope you think about how you may be able to contribute to the work of our League's committees.

As you can see, we have monumental challenges ahead of us, and many who are deeply involved

"The League of Women Voters of Texas advocated strongly against this law and other attempts by the Texas legislature to roll back reproductive rights." "Reproductive choice is not only a dire issue concerning the rights of women and all people who may become pregnant, but one of racial and economic justice. Limits on reproductive health services disproportionately impact Black, brown, and low-income communities, therefore upholding and perpetuating income inequality and white supremacy. "Bodily autonomy is a personal right. The League of Women Voters believes every person deserves the access and the privacy to make their own reproductive choices, and we will continue the fight for reproductive justice in Texas and across the nation."

It's hard not to feel overwhelmed. I reviewed my own journey into the League of Women Voters and it started when I was very frustrated with what I thought of as a war on women by some members of our government. I had to ask myself, well what are

have worked tirelessly and passionately as we pivot to the twists in the ever-changing landscape. So here is my appeal, we have several opportunities where you can assist with your talents. For any of these, please reach out to me and I'll put you in touch with the right

person!

- Do you have a flair for writing?
- Do you like to put together public relations campaigns?
- Do you have a desire to increase our social media presence and usage?
- Do your friends and family consider you the party planner?
- Do you like to get into the numbers and set budgets?
- Do you like to raise money?
- Do you like to make phone calls?
- Do you like to learn from others through meetings?

The list is endless... whatever your talent is, I am sure we can use it. You don't have to do it all, we welcome whatever you can contribute! Just reach out to me, and I'll put you in touch with the right committee and people.

On a final note, we look forward to seeing you at the Fall Membership meeting on Monday, October 4th at 7:00. Please see our announcement in this edition and plan to attend.

Wishing for brighter days for all!

~Sue

LWV / ABC CALENDAR 2021

*Indicates that the gathering is virtual

OCTOBER DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AWARENESS MONTH NATIONAL BULLYING PREVENTION MONTH

- 2** - Mooningwanekaaning Treaty Days - Madeline Island 11 a.m. - 5 p.m.
INTERNATIONAL DAY OF NON-VIOLENCE
- 4** - LWV/ABC Membership Meeting 7 p.m.*
Speaker: Paul Demain from Honor the Earth
- 5** - Natural Resources Weekly Meeting 9:30 a.m.*
- 4-8** - NATIONAL VOTER EDUCATION WEEK
- 7** - LWVWI Presentation about the benefits of Investing in Infrastructure
Speaker: Bill Holahan, Professor Emeritus in Economics, UW-Milwaukee
- 11** - INDIGENOUS PEOPLES' DAY
NATIONAL COMING OUT DAY
- 12** - Natural Resources Committee Meeting 9:30 a.m.*
- 13** - LWV/ABC Executive Committee Meeting 4-5 p.m.*
- 15** - Voter Services Monthly Meeting 10-11 a.m.*
- 19** - Natural Resources Committee Meeting 9:30 a.m.*
LWV/ABC Monthly Board Meeting 4-6 p.m.*
MAWLID-AL-NABI
- 21** - Bad River Candidates Forum 6 p.m.
- 24** - UNITED NATIONS DAY
- 25** - Line 5 Coalition Meeting 11 a.m. - 12 p.m.*
- 30** - LWVWI Virtual Issues Briefing 9 a.m. - 12 p.m.*
- 31** - SAMHAIN/HALLOWEEN

NOVEMBER NATIVE AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH

- 2** - Natural Resources Weekly Meeting 9:30 a.m.*
DÍA DE LOS MUERTOS
- 4-7** - Natural Resources Committee Meeting 9:30 a.m.*
- 6** - BIRTH OF THE BÁB
- 7** - BIRTH OF THE BAHÁ'U'LLÁH
- 9** - Natural Resources Committee Meeting 9:30 a.m.*
- 10** - LWV/ABC Executive Committee Meeting 4-5 p.m.*
- 11** - VETERANS DAY
- 16** - Natural Resources Committee Meeting 9:30 a.m.*
- 19** - Voter Services Monthly Meeting 10-11 a.m.*
- 20** - TRANSGENDER DAY OF RESILIENCE
- 22** - Line 5 Coalition Meeting 11 a.m. - 12 p.m.*
- 23** - Natural Resources Committee Meeting 9:30 a.m.*
- 25** - THANKSGIVING
INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR THE ELIMINATION
OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN
- 26** - BUY NOTHING DAY
- 29-12/6** - CHANUKAH
- 30** - Natural Resources Committee Meeting 9:30 a.m.*

DECEMBER

- 1** - WORLD AIDS DAY
- 3** - INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES
- 7** - Natural Resources Committee Meeting 9:30 a.m.*
- 8** - BODHI DAY
- 9** - INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS DAY
- 14** - Natural Resources Committee Meeting 9:30 a.m.*
- 17** - Voter Services Monthly Meeting 10-11 a.m.*
- 18** - INTERNATIONAL MIGRANTS DAY
- 21** - WINTER SOLSTICE / YULE
- 25** - CHRISTMAS
- 26-1/1** - KWANZAA
- 1/1** - NEW YEARS DAY



Protect Your Right to Vote!

COMPILED INFO BY SUZIE ULMER

ARE YOU ELIGIBLE TO VOTE?

- Must be US citizen/WI resident
- 18 years of age on election day
- Lived at current address at least 10 days
- Felons: can vote when served term “off paper”

YOU NEED TO RE-REGISTER IF

- You have never registered in Wisconsin
- Address changed since the last time you voted
- Legal name change: go to social security office
- You have not voted in 4 years

ARE YOU STILL REGISTERED TO VOTE?

Online: myvote.wi.gov: “my voter information”

Contact: your municipal clerk

Contact: the WI Election Commission:

866-868-3947 (toll free)

608-266-8005 (direct)

ADDRESS ON DRIVER LICENSE/WI STATE

ID CURRENT?

Update your current address with the DMV

- Update online: Wisconsin.gov
- Go to your local DMV service center (*check hours*)

HOW DO I REGISTER TO VOTE?

Online: myvote.wi.gov

- You need current/valid DL or State ID
- Address problem: contact: Election Commission

Municipal Clerk’s office: (*call them for an appointment*)

- Correct address with DMV prior going to clerk
- If no DL/State ID: take proof of residence

(All proof of residence must include name and current address:

utility bill, paycheck, bank/credit card statement, phone bill, etc.)

- provide last 4 numbers of social security number

Wisconsin State Voter Helpline

(608) 285-2141

Will Return Your Call Within 24 Hours



Farmer’s Market in Ashland



Ashland Bandshell



2021-22 LWV/ABC Board & Committee Members

League of Women Voters Websites:

LWV of Wisconsin: <https://my.lwv.org/wisconsin>

LWV National: <https://www.lwv.org/>

Our Website: <https://www.lwvabcwi.org/>

COMMITTEES

Executive Committee

Sue Niemi
President

Roger Aiken
Treasurer

Open
President-Elect

Gail Syverud
Membership

Kate Siegler
Secretary

Communications Committee

Kate Bortell
Website and Social Media

Matt Oestreich
G Suites

Sue Niemi
Email Blasts

Jack Ring
Newsletter

Liz Seefeldt
Bottom Line Liaison

Anne Chartier
Diane Koosed
Editors

Membership Committee

Gail Syverud
Chair

Voter Services Committee

Anne Chartier
Diane Koosed
Co-Chairs

Natural Resources Advocacy Committee

Joan Elias
Chair

Civic Engagement Committee

Bev Lindell
Chair

Inequality Action Committee

Jan Penn
Linda Jorgenson
Co-Chairs

Program & Events Committee

Open Chair

BOARD

Contact the Board at:

info@lwvabcwi.org or

PO Box 175, Ashland, WI 54806

Sue Niemi
President

Open
President-Elect

Roger Aiken
Treasurer

Kate Siegler
Secretary

Barb Bell
Anne Chartier
Joan Elias
Linda Jorgenson
Diane Koosed
Bev Lindell
Jan Penn
Gail Syverud
Faith Smith
Dee Sweet

Finance Committee Open Chair

Roger Aiken
Treasurer

Nominations Committee

Gary Sherman **Chair** Bev Lindell
Board Liaison

Gail Syverud Kay Saari

Civic Engagement cont. from pg. 1

national decision makers. It means finding a way to connect in your community by speaking out, joining school parents' groups, attending township and county board meetings, communicating with elected officials, volunteering with service organizations, etc.

A valuable opportunity for information on our stated priorities will be our October 4th League of Women Voters of Ashland and Bayfield Counties Fall Membership meeting during which our speaker will be Paul Demain, from Honor the Earth.

In addition, on **October 14th at 12:00 noon Mapped Out** will be a free listening event on redistricting in our state presented by Wisconsin Public Radio.

Continue to watch our LWV/ABC website and future newsletters for action alerts and community discussion groups. We are looking forward to a year of renewed interest and energy as we learn and work together.

We will meet by Zoom online video conferencing set up by League President, Sue Niemi.

Register in advance for this webinar:

tinyurl.com/LWVABCOct4

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the webinar.

On the day of the event, we are asking you to sign in 10 minutes prior to the start time of the meeting which will begin promptly at 7:00 pm.

Fall Membership Meeting on October 4th GAIL SYVERUD

I AM HAPPY to announce that the League of Women Voters of Ashland and Bayfield Counties (LWV/ABC) will hold our Fall Membership Meeting on October 4, 2021 from 7:00 to 8:30 pm.

The meeting will be co-sponsored with Wisconsin Conservation Voices, a digital advertising campaign, and Wisconsin Native Vote. The organization was founded in 2011 in order to overcome voter suppression that Native people have been subject to for generations. Wisconsin Native Vote focuses on engaging Native American voters through grassroots organizing efforts.

Denise Sweet will be our moderator for the evening. In addition to being a member of the LWV/ABC Board, Dee serves as the Native Vote Manager. Her work includes registering voters, educating them about the electoral process and helping to build awareness about the environmental issues that are important to tribal citizens in Wisconsin and the Great Lakes region.

We have invited Paul Demain to be our guest speaker. He would like to share information on Climate Change, Honor the Earth Encampment and Resistance to MN Line 3.

Paul DeMain (Skabewis) is the founder of News from Indian Country and CEO of Indian Country Communications. He has served as past president of the Native American Journalists Association and was an advisor on Indian Affairs Policy to Governor Tony Earl. DeMain is currently chair of Honor the Earth board of directors and is an active opponent of Enbridge Line 3 oil pipeline placement. Paul is a citizen of the Oneida Nation and a descendant of the White Earth Band of Anishinaabeg.

Economic Inequality Action Committee

LINDA JORGENSON & JAN PENN

WE BEGIN OUR REPORT WITH A REMINDER. WHILE THE CUP IS HALF EMPTY, IT IS ALSO HALF FULL.

The empty half:

If it seems clear to you that the old way of doing things is not working, you are not alone. Over these past few years, life as we have known it has tumbled into crisis mode and with that, we have experienced trauma. Those most at risk, those who have lived with the ever-present inequities, have been hit the hardest. It would be hard to find anyone, however, who is not worried, who is not also suspended in this state of trauma.

In the LWV/ABC Economic Inequality Study (2017) we laid out the basis of the problem—a combination of decades of policy at all levels of American government that favored the 1%/corporate interests over the common good of the people, alongside the challenge of transition from an outmoded industrial society to one which will be more automated/resilient/sustainable, and care based.

The full half:

In the 2017 study we also addressed our resources, our assets.

“The League of Women Voters of Ashland and Bayfield Counties takes comfort in the fact that the citizens of Ashland and Bayfield Counties recognize this inequity and embrace defending our democratic form of government and restoring faith in the American Dream. From agriculture to small business, from small scale manufacturing to renewable energy, we are busy redefining ourselves, not as a poor and backward rural area, but as a vibrant economy full of talented people and innovative ideas. We take heart that our proud heritage of resiliency and creative pioneering spirit will serve us well in the fight to build a strong, sustainable, equitable and democratic place for ourselves, our children and grandchildren, and on down for seven generations.”

We laid out an agenda for change. Since 2017 the Committee, our LWV, has approached this agenda with a number of strategies but have not seen the full community engagement we’d hope for.

Moving forward to fill the cup:

Perhaps the stars, and the convergence of “fires, floods, famine and pestilence” have begun to drive us to up our game. Whatever has occurred, our LWV/ABC’s action chairs and board have begun to move to connect the dots. The Civic Engagement, Voters Services, Natural Resources and Economic Inequality recognize that to reset the paradigm for a healthy diverse/inclusive democracy that meets people’s needs, and to move in rapid response to the climate crisis and its impact on all life forms, we need to work with as many community partners as we can muster to show that another future is possible.

So our committee is hand in hand committed this year to the goal of bringing a diverse group of partners, from our county officials to tribal leaders, to the table to begin hammering out what we need to decarbonize, replace extractive industries with living wage jobs, retrofit our residential and commercial buildings to be climate resilient and affordable, make a robust network of public health and affordable private health care, offer our children high quality affordable childcare and education, protect our water and public lands, expand regenerative agriculture and defend effective democratic governance. This is a heavy lift. The invested interests in the old ways are mounting a huge fight against all this. But the people’s will is on our side.

Our Fall Membership Meeting serves as the kickoff. YOU and every member and friend of the LWV/ABC is going to be asked to step up, identify what piece you have the talent and capacity to contribute to the joint work of the Action Program. YOU are being asked to bring your friends and neighbors to the discussion table.

Our Inequality Action Committee will continue to do our part to monitor issues and policy proposals of economic justice and support action to advance

Economic Ineq. Report cont. on pg. 10

Natural Resources Advocacy Committee

JOAN ELIAS



THE NATURAL RESOURCES

COMMITTEE continues our work in opposition to the Enbridge Line 5 reroute and expansion around the Bad River Reservation. The reroute adds 41 miles to the pipeline yet remains within the Bad River Watershed, threatening even more water resources than the existing line. We firmly believe that investing in an expansion of fossil fuel infrastructure at this time of climate crisis is wrong-headed.

We actively collaborate with other organizations to increase public awareness of the risk Enbridge Line 5 poses to our community. Through our cooperative efforts a new committee has been spawned – Superior Waters Story Corps (<https://www.lwvabcwi.org/take-action/2020/9/30/join-the-protectors-of-the-bad-river-watershed-story-corps>). Watch for upcoming storytelling events and consider telling your story of your connection to this land and these waters that we all cherish.

Many other issues come across the desks of the NR Committee at both local and state-wide levels, including:

- participation in the Ashland stormwater study group;
- the proposal of water extraction from a private artesian spring in the Town of Clover for private profit;
- the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources' wolf management policies, and the gross overharvest of wolves that occurred in February;
- the refusal of the Natural Resources Board president to step down when his term ended in May, and the refusal of the State Legislature to approve Gov. Evers replacement (Sandra Nass, from Washburn – a woman who would represent the interests of the far north);
- the opportunity to weigh in on resolutions to be considered by the Conservation Congress; and the list goes on.

As our committee tries to prioritize the enormity of natural resource issues coming our way it is clear that we, as a society, also need to address economic disparities, climate change, and social injustice - simultaneously. We can only do this through protection of voting rights and governance under a fair democracy. Without fair voting opportunities and a government that can work together we will not make the meaningful changes we all hope to accomplish.

Our LWV/ABC chapter's committee chairs have started meeting as an "Action Committee" to try to connect the dots across the issues that face us today. We hope to contribute to the building of a vibrant, resilient community, and we will need active involvement from everyone. Please consider stepping forward to contribute your energy, expertise, and passion. Our committees welcome you!



Have you been wondering what all the concern is about Enbridge Line 5? You are **not alone!!** For further information about this pipeline, and to “come up to speed,” please check out:

[RetireLine5.org](https://www.retireline5.org)

Packed full of facts from both Michigan and Wisconsin



solutions. You will be seeing action alerts to this end, but YOU need to become the eyes and ears of this process. We ask that you send emails, contact the Committee as you identify issues that based on the LWV’s positions can become action alerts.

We also plan to request that the LWV-WI organize a statewide Listserv similar to their Natural Resources one on the “Caring Economy”. This will enable us to communicate among Leaguers statewide on ideas/advocacy for an inclusive, diverse and just and equitable replacement economy for our fossil fuel economy. We would also like to propose that the LWV-WI follow up their excellent 2021 series on Wisconsin’s infrastructure needs to deal with climate change with one on the “Caring” infrastructure needed to deal with climate crises. It might include topics such as

1. **Affordable/accessible health care;**
2. **Affordable housing;**
3. **paid family leave and universal child-care;**
4. **High quality public education; and**
5. **Fair and free voting and an end to gerrymandering and big money in politics.**

Many times, these last few years you have heard WE ARE IN THIS TOGETHER. We have power and we must make this a reality!

(Refer to LWV/ABC website for updates-all Action Committees, Calendar, Economic Inequality Study and Equity Consensus, Program/Education, etc.)

Voter Services Committee

ANNE CHARTIER

THE VOTER SERVICES COMMITTEE has met monthly since our last issue of the Leaguer and will continue to do so in the months ahead. September 28 was designated National Voter Registration Day this year. Fortunately, Wisconsin allows registration at the polls on Election Day provided one can prove residence and show a photo ID. Except during a few days before we vote in person, it is possible to register at just about any time through the Wisconsin Elections Commission (WEC) website myvote.wi.gov or with the local municipal clerk. We have planned a presence at educational institutions, libraries and farmers' markets, in addition to providing flyers including comprehensive voter registration information with Meals on Wheels and food bank distributions. Our efforts to encourage voter registration and defend voting rights are ongoing even though we will not have elections until the spring of 2022.

Legislative attempts throughout our nation to curtail voting rights have been rampant and unfortunately, in some instances, successful. In Wisconsin, Governor Evers vetoed several bills this summer that would have made voting more difficult. The League of Women Voters has engaged with nonpartisan partners in efforts to get the US Congress to pass the For the People Act and the John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act. Thus far partisan gridlock has impeded passage in spite of numerous calls from constituents urging recalcitrant representatives to make the bills law of the land. Such legislation would go a long way to protect our right to vote, reduce the influence of money in politics, and guarantee fair maps.

Census figures were made available later than usual this year because of the pandemic, and counties are currently engaged in

the process of drawing district maps in conformity with prescribed guidelines. At the state level it is quite probable that the matter will end up in court. The governor created a People's Maps Commission that held hearings in all the congressional districts and accepted suggestions regarding potential fair maps. Unfortunately, it appears that our divided state legislature will not be able to produce an acceptable compromise. Statewide efforts to pass resolutions and engage the public in the process have been successful in raising awareness about what is at stake when maps are gerrymandered to benefit one party.

In terms of visibility in support of voting rights we organized a small but mighty caravan that drove from the Northern Great Lakes Visitor Center to the Lac Courtes Oreilles Community College on May 8 with stops along the way, including Hayward. It was part of the John Lewis Day of Action. On August 28 members and friends stood with signs in Washburn, Highbridge, Hayward and Ashland inviting passersby to ask senators to pass the John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act that had

Voter Services cont. on pg. 12

recently made it through the House of Representatives.

Committee chairs within our local League are joining forces to collaborate as we seek to mitigate and deal with the very serious consequences of Climate Change, find ways to protect and nurture our Democracy and build Resilience in our communities. Please contact Diane Koosed at koolake@gmail.com or 715-979-1723 if you would like to attend one of our monthly Voter Services meetings.



Lac Courtes Oreilles John Lewis Day of Action



Highbridge Stands for Voting Rights



Democracy Corner in Hayward