



Dear Friends in League,
 Thank you to all League members who worked toward making the 2020 General Election such a success. Record numbers of citizens exercised their right to vote in our area and nationwide, despite the challenges presented by the Covid-19 pandemic. Special thanks those of you who worked as

election officials, poll workers, and observers to ensure that this election was, as described in most accounts, one of the most secure, and fairest in history.

Now that the election process is nearly over, our message needs to be **“Forward Together.”** Quoting from LWVWI Executive Director, Debra Cronmiller, on our Presidents’ Call of November 18:

This message intends to bind voters together and focus on the agenda of the voters - around economic wellbeing, COVID relief, healthcare, climate change, and racial justice. This can be done by positioning the election as a victory for all Wisconsinites of every background, political position and/or zip code. Additionally, it is important to remind people what we voted for - a set of shared values such as democracy, freedom, fairness, justice etc., and a future where we can make ends meet, provide for our families and get the care we need. Lastly, the leadership of this agenda is grassroots and should stem from the voters, not the politicians. We voted together in historic numbers for a shared agenda and government that will govern for us all and pursue our own agenda.

There are two other relatively new topics from that meeting that I would like to share with all members:

Community Safety. Because the term “defund police” has so many interpretations, LWVWI President Louise Petering suggests using other terms such as “community safety” when discussing the issue. LWVUS has taken no position because funding of police and sheriffs happens at the local level. Local Leagues should form their own stance using LWVWI positions on administration of justice, community policy, and health care and mental health positions. The LWVUS does has positions on the militarization of federal forces, civil rights, and human rights that can be applied to issues like police brutality or the militarization of cities with the presence of federal troops.

Infrastructure. LWV Milwaukee County recently submitted a proposal to the LWVWI board that the League partner with the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) on an infrastructure cooperation plan that will have a positive impact on Wisconsin’s economy and jobs. The proposal was approved. I will share information on this new project with the Board and the membership as it develops.

Eleven counties in Wisconsin passed Fair Maps referenda in the election, increasing the number to 28 counties. The LWVWI recently sent out a “Call to Action” to League members to submit letters to the Wisconsin Supreme Court opposing a petition submitted by the Wisconsin Institute for Law and Liberty (WILL) to have legal challenges to redistricting jump immediately to the Supreme Court rather than work their way through the lower courts in the normal process.

Please pay attention to these “Calls to Action” and respond if you can. The League provides a rationale

*See PRESIDENT, Page 2

* President's Letter

Continued from page 1

for the action it requests, and often suggests language that we can use in our messaging. There are approximately 3000 League members in Wisconsin, so if a sizeable number of us write letters or make phone

calls in response to such calls to action, we can have an impact.

As we enter the Winter Holiday Season, I hope you and your family have Safe and Happy Holidays, whether you celebrate them together in person or virtually.



Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Policy

Each month we will be placing our position on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in the Voter, as a service to our members.

LWV is an organization fully committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion in principle and in practice. Diversity, equity and inclusion are central to the organization's current and future success in engaging all individuals, households, communities, and policy makers in creating a more perfect democracy.

There shall be no barriers to full participation in this organization on the basis of gender, gender identity, ethnicity, race, native or indigenous origin, age, generation, sexual orientation, culture, religion, belief system, marital status, parental status, socioeconomic status, language, accent, ability status, mental health, educational level or background, geography, nationality, workstyle, work experience, job role function, thinking style, personality type, physical appearance, political perspective or affiliation and/or any other characteristic that can be identified as

recognizing or illustrating diversity.

The Janesville LWV commits to the diversity of Janesville and fully endorses the LWV's DEI policy.



Thank You

for all you do to defend democracy



As we reflect on 2020, the League of Women Voters of Wisconsin has a lot to be thankful for. In February, we celebrated 100th anniversary of the League of Women Voters and in August, we celebrated the 100th anniversary of the final ratification of the 19th Amendment, granting women the right to vote. We thank all of our members who joined us around the state to ring bells and celebrate these important anniversaries. A special thank you goes out to our lifetime members for their leadership and presence among us for over 50+ years.

2020 has been an important election year, and while we have faced obstacles with the COVID-19 pandemic and voter suppression tactics, we have a lot to be proud of. Despite all odds, Wisconsin voters voted in record numbers in November, a significant number of those votes being cast by absentee ballots.

LWV



Thank you to all who helped to get-out-the-vote by promoting nonpartisan resources such as VOTE411.org, as well as resources to make it easy for voters to access the ballot by mail. Thank you to those who participated in

our election observation program, and to everyone who showed up for their communities by working as election officials. You have all helped to defend democracy with us.

If you participated in or attended our 2020 Issues Briefing Series, thank you for engaging in important conversations around natural resources, social policy, government policy and COVID-19. If you would like to view any of the past programs, please visit our [events calendar archive](#), or our [virtual programming webpage](#). Thank you also to our tireless advocates around the state that stand up to ensure the passage of Fair Maps referenda; defend groundwater, rivers and our Great Lakes against political and corporate attacks; fight back voter suppression, and work to ensure an accountable and impartial judiciary.

Thank you to the local Leagues that are completing the Semi-Annual LWVUS survey related to your League's election, legislative, communications, and diversity, equity and inclusion activities since January 2020. You can access the survey [here](#), where you can download the full survey as a word document and access the online survey. **The survey closes on December 4**, and we encourage you all to take the time to fill in your activities.

Lastly, local Leagues should have received an anonymous, demographic survey from LWVWI last week. Please pass this survey along to your members, and thank you to all who have already done so!

League of Women Voters of Wisconsin, Inc.

Located in the Center for Change
612 W. Main Street, Suite 200, Madison, WI 53703
(608) 256-0827; lwwisconsin@lwwwi.org

We are learning about ‘Sundown Towns’

eliminating racism
empowering women
ywca

The Rock County YWCA held their Racial Justice Conference on Zoom this year. Dr James Loewen gave the morning keynote “Lies My Teacher Told

Me and What To Do About Them” and presented one of breakout sessions “Sundown Towns: All White on Purpose”

What are Sundown Towns?

Sundown Towns are communities that are “all white” on purpose. Some communities were created white from the beginning with restrictive housing covenants. Others were made that way through intimidation and force. In Pierce City, Missouri 3000 whites drove out 300 black residents and took over their homes. Manitowoc, Wisconsin has a sign “N***** don’t let the sun go down on your black ass” into the 1960s. Villa Grove, Illinois had a siren on town water tower that went off daily at 6:00 pm until 1999. In another Illinois town, the Police Chief would approach black persons who were in town for a few hours or longer and ask their business.

Sundown towns are primarily a northern phenomenon. Loewen has documented 506 sundown and former sundown communities in his home state of Illinois – that’s nearly two-thirds of the state’s total. He found 200 more in Iowa, and at least 100 in Wisconsin. Mississippi, on the other hand, has six. Households that hired domestics wanted their help to live nearby.

Prevalence of sundown towns peaked in 1970, two years after congress passed the Fair Housing Act and made the practice illegal. But inertia maintains the sta-

tus quo in many sundown communities. The reputation continues this is a hostile place to non-whites. Realtors steer would be BIPOC (Black Indigenous, People of Color) to “friendlier” neighborhoods. Sometimes a small “thug” portion of the white population acts to enforce the town’s tradition.

When the percentage of white residents shrinks – sometimes below 50% - but opportunities and connections are still reserved for whites, the town has achieved “Second Generation Sundown Town” status. Here you will see “driving while black” policing, white curriculum and teaching staff, white politicians and civic leaders, and other signs of an all-white power structure. You will hear terrible rhetoric, with negative statements and “they” comments about non-whites.

How can we reform a Sundown Town?

We need countermeasures to overcome the inertia of a second generation sundown town. Loewen first suggests confirming a town’s sundown status. Check old census records and historical documents. Once the documentation is in place, acknowledge the history publicly. People in the community need to say “We did this”. The next step is to acknowledge wrongdoing: “We did this. It was wrong. We are sorry.” The third step is to change community practices. Change the rhetoric. Expand the power structure. Then (and only then) the community can say “We did this. It was wrong. We are sorry. We don’t do it any more.”



Can you help?



The DEI Committee has stories of racial covenants in Janesville, from the Eastwood subdivision, Beloit Ave, near Adams school, the “Indian Reservation”, the south side. We only have one historical document, a Deed to house on 1102 Beloit Avenue, sold by General Motors to Lawrence and Dorothy Smith

in 1951. One of the covenants reads:

“The premises conveyed hereby shall be subject to the following conditions and restrictions . . . The said premises shall not be sold, conveyed, leased to or in any

way occupied by any person or persons not wholly of the white or Caucasian race, nor to or by any corporation, the majority stock of which is owned by or which is controlled by persons of any race other than the white or Caucasian race.”

We would like to find more, but property research is tricky. Can you help us? Do you know of other Janesville properties that had similar statements attached to them at any point in history?

To do our research we will need one of the following:
Address + Copy of Deed containing Racial Covenant
OR Address and/or property description + Year house was built + Name of first owner
OR Address and/or property description + Year Covenant was removed + Name of owner at time covenant removed

If you can help us with this project, please contact Mary Buelow at buelow_m@msn.com

CALENDAR

Upcoming Activities 2020-21*

*Additional events may be planned. Check website: lwvjvl.org/upcoming-events



December 2020

December 7 Board Meeting
via Zoom

December 8 Voter Service via

Zoom

December 21 DEI via Zoom

Voter Service Report

Voter Services Report – October 2020

Note: I will provide a few more details of our activities in the next edition of our newsletter.

Voter Services has continued to do community work within our individual comfort level. The Madison office has provided many great opportunities to work from home, Thank you Eileen Newcomer and the staff in that office! They are a great team and are doing a professional job in getting information out and assisting the local leagues!

Candidate Forum with Linda Reinhardt & 's coordination Laura Peterson's professional moderating was a success and an important community resource for voters.

We participated in two drive through events at **Traxler Park** handing out materials to cars that were also there to donate to ECHO. The detail on actual funds raised and food will be outlined next month.

We participated in **Voter Helpline** – which we partnered with the Madison League Carol Herzig as our contact person. This was an added resource for voters to ask questions by phone.



Vote411.org

- New to Rock County – was a project for each of the elections. Although there has been resistance by some candidates to respond to the questions, we did

our part to follow up many times. I am hopeful the participation of candidates will only increase in the future.

Jail Program- Joint Effort with Beloit League – & the NAACP we contacted the Rock County Jail to determine if there were programs or assistance to have eligible voters and I am happy to report, they have a very well organized program working with Lisa Tollefson and the County Clerk's office to make sure their program is timely and available to all eligible voters in the jail.

Posters/Signs – Linda Reinhardt made sure the members received our new yard signs and Heide Keith handled distributing "Are You Ready to Vote" posters – through out the community! Thank you both!

Communications Committee Meetings were productive, everyone had great ideas and were there to assist during this extremely busy time!

DAT Event Oct 15 – So You Think You Can Vote Program – The League participated in providing "action" items for the attendees on what can be done as a voter during the remainder of October **until the Election.**

Pack the Polls – Saturday Oct 24- Car Parade was a success! We had about 20 cars and the Janesville Gazette assisted with information for the public. WCLO has been very supportive in doing life radio "spots".

Hedberg – Saturday 9-Noon – Handing out Voter Service Materials

NEXT Voter Services Committee Meeting Tuesday, November 10, 2020 6:30 via Zoom
Thank you all for your support!

Like us on Facebook

<facebook.com/JanesvilleLeagueofWomenVoters>

Follow us on Twitter <twitter.com/LWVJanesville> OR
<[@LWVJanesville](https://twitter.com/@LWVJanesville)>



Are you reading this newsletter as a 'guest'?
Joining the League of Women Voters is easy simply fill in this form and mail.

Name _____

Address _____

E-mail _____

Phone Number _____

- | | | | | | |
|--------------------------|--|---------|--------------------------|-----------|----------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Individual | \$65.00 | <input type="checkbox"/> | Household | \$100.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Supporting | \$75.00 | <input type="checkbox"/> | Student | \$10.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | & _____ Open Door Membership | | | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | I am unable to join the League at this time but enclosed is a contribution of \$_____. | | | | |

Please make your check payable to: League of Women Voters -
Janesville, P.O. Box 8064, Janesville, WI 53547-8064

- I request consideration for a LWV scholarship.

Web addresses of National, State and Local Leagues:

To check out the action go to: **LWV-US**

<www.lwv.org>

LWV-WI *<www.lwvwi.org>*

JANESVILLE LEAGUE

<www.lwvjvl.org>