



Dear Friends in League,

As we enter the month of November, it is not too early to be thinking about the Spring 2022 nonpartisan elections. Candidates may circulate and file nomination papers between December 1, 2021 and January 4, 2022. The Spring Primary (if needed) will be on February 15 and the Spring

Election will be on April 5.

Offices on the ballot will include:

- Rock County Board Supervisors
- City Council Members
- Town & Village Board Members
- School Board Members

Please consider what role you will take to ensure that good candidates are elected to office.

Running for elective office yourself is an excellent way to make a difference in our community. Several members of our League have served, or are serving, on school boards, city councils, and the county board. I am confident that they would be happy to share their wisdom and insights with you.

If you don't run for office yourself, you can encourage others to run for office and work on their campaigns.

If you prefer not to run for elective office, you can

serve in local government as a member of a city or county commission, board or committee that works on issues that are of deep concern to you. Check the county and municipal websites to find the descriptions of the committees and the process for applying for membership.

Consider participating in our League's **Observer Corps** to be the "eyes and ears" of the League by attending meetings of a board or committee. In the past, the observations of these members have provided our League with topics that we have studied in forums and lively issues programs. Contact Deb Kolste (dkolste@yahoo.com) or Nancy Stabb (nstabb@charter.net) if you are interested in getting involved this way.

Finally, consider serving as either an election official (i.e., poll worker) or as a League election observer in the upcoming 2022 elections. Contact your municipal clerk if you are interested in working as an election official. Watch for messages from Eileen Newcomer of the LWVWI office for information about the League's election observer program.

In 2022, League members need to step up as never before to "Make Democracy Work."

Linda

My sincerest apologies

I must tell you how sorry I am for the lateness of this newsletter. My intentions were to have it out in the normal timely manner, but I have been going through medical health issues for the last month. While I am far from back to my old self I had to publish this before the month is out!

Thank you for understanding.

Carol Herzig, Editor

2021 Wisconsin LWV Virtual Issues Briefing

Empowering the Wisconsin Vote! October 30, 2021

By Susan Amber Johnson
Issues Briefing Report

From 9AM until noon on Saturday, Oct. 30, the state LWV presented an issues briefing concerning our main mission of empowering our local and state vote. The keynote speaker Sarah Eskrich, the Executive Director of Democracy Found, holds a Master's Degree in Public Policy from UW-Madison, and also a Master's Degree in Public Health from UW. Her speech focused on mending our broken political system in Wisconsin, and throughout our nation. Our politics have become so polarized, we are dysfunctional. Americans aren't getting done what is needed for the country's best interest.

Eskrich has devised political reform, which she calls Final Five voting, and is designed to cut through our current gridlock. Her plan is based on two structural problems she sees as continuing the dysfunction. Our primaries are party-based, not candidate-based. Party-based primaries are restrictive for many potential candidates. We may never see some of the most talented potential candidates because of the possibility for a spoiler candidate coming to the fore, and defeating the incumbent official. Eskrich prefers a single ballot primary with all candidates listed from any party on one ballot. Voters would choose their top five candidates. The top five candidates winning the primary would then move onto the general election. Voters would rank their top five candidates in the general election. Ranked voting is supported by many throughout the United States as being much more fair to all candidates. Voters would be free to rank one choice, or a few, or all choices. The candidate receiving the highest ranking would be named the winner.

Alaska was the first state to pass ranked voting. Other states like New York and California have also adopted the practice. According to Eskrich, ranked voting alone would still be problematic, however, because these states did not include a single ballot primary in their reform package. The only way to get a real plurality of candidates, creating real competition, is to leave political parties out of the primaries through use of a single ballot. It is possible to find issues with Final Five voting, but this system might ensure greater competition with a plurality of voting, and the potential for more diverse candidates being included in our elections. Final five voting has promise for ensuring that our legislative bodies can get work done in the best interest of the general public throughout Wisconsin, and the United States.

In the Legal Strategies to Combat Voter Suppression Laws break-out sessions, Jon Sherman of the Fair Elections Center, spoke broadly of voter suppression throughout the United States, and

Mel Barnes of Law Forward: Furthering Democracy in Wisconsin focused her information specifically on the state of Wisconsin. In Wisconsin our attacks on voting rights have come from the state legislature, which has focused on passing new voting restrictions. The attacks have also come in the form of litigation, seeking to reinterpret our state laws on voting rights. In addition, attacks have included the area of election administration, making it more difficult and confusing to carry out elections. The purpose of these attacks seems to be in muddying the waters, so poll workers and voters are unsure of what the law truly says.

The Wisconsin League of Women Voters hired Law Forward to represent them in several recent court cases. In *Fabick v. Wisconsin Elections Commission (WEC)*, the petitioner wanted to halt absentee voting for the April 2020 election. The Wisconsin Supreme Court refused to take up the case, and therefore left the existing absentee voting procedures in place. In *Teigen V. WEC*, the petitioner seeks to remove the number of ways absentee ballots can be returned throughout the state. Wisconsin voters have the right to return their absentee ballots to the clerk's office, or via the United States Postal Service, or return it by dropping it in a designated drop box. During the pandemic, clerks saw the need to offer additional drop boxes around their municipalities. Currently, this case has not been settled, and is still ongoing. Barnes admitted that she considers the potential for success when she agrees to take on a case. Otherwise, the result might be a decrease in voting rights across Wisconsin. The League needs to continue its fight for voting rights, and continue to engage its communities in the struggle for democracy.

I also attended the DEI at the local level break-out session. Eloisa Gomez, Co-Chair of Milwaukee County LWV Alliances Committee led the session, along with speakers Robin Schmidt of LaCrosse Area LWV, Donna Weldman of Greater Chippewa Valley LWV, and Jane Kettler of Sheboygan County LWV. Each individual speaker discussed what their local league did to learn more about DEI issues, and to reach out to others in order to increase the diversity of their membership.

Schmidt told us her League used the SWOT method for examining their policies and practices. Looking at their strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) was helpful in identifying underrepresented groups among their membership, and in finding ways to reach out to these groups. The Greater Chippewa Valley LWV is currently working on educating its current members about diversity, and on confronting their own biases. They are reaching out to students attending UW-EauClaire and UW-Stout to increase the diversity of their membership. The Sheboygan

* Issues Briefing

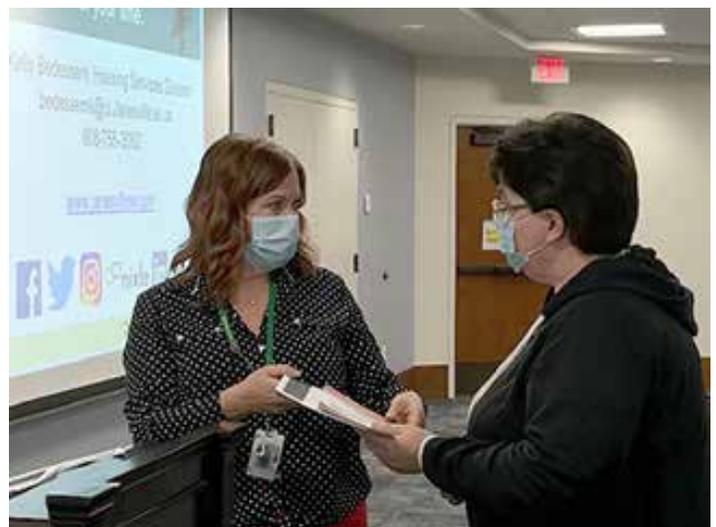
Continued from page 2

County League has used a multi-pronged approach to increase their diversity. Their members increased their visibility in the county by building partnerships with other organizations whose mission aligns well with theirs in much the same way as Janesville's League has done with its collaboration. In addition, Sheboygan County League has reached out to area churches and food markets. They admit that language is often a barrier for accomplishing their work with Latinx residents. They applied for and won a grant, which allows them to translate all their materials into Spanish. Furthermore, they've sent informational mass mailers reaching out to potential voters, particularly in areas where residents have been least likely to vote.

Eloisa Gomez discussed the Milwaukee County's Alliances Committee at length. They've gone beyond the phase of educating its members about DEI issues, and of confronting their personal biases. They are forming alliances with the various diverse groups who live in Milwaukee County in similar ways as the Rock County Diversity Action Team has done with its Allies of Native Nations Committee. In forming alliances, members need to develop personal relationships with people who are different from them. Differences are often ethnically-based, but may also include gender, or sexual orientation differences. In an alliance committee, League members learn how to be good allies with members of diverse groups. In addition to forming alliances, translating information, and

sending mass mailers, another way to reach out in an effort to increase the diversity of League members would be to offer our memberships on a sliding-fee scale. Membership costs money, and often the people we are seeking cannot afford to pay the cost of membership.

Empowering the Wisconsin Vote concluded with words of inspiration from the National League of Women Voters President, Debra Turner. She names our fight, Women Power America's Democracy. This campaign focuses on three main goals: the Democracy Truth Project, the Democracy Defense Fund Project, and a Fair Maps Project. The Democracy Truth Project fights lies about our elections and voting system, no matter where they are found. In order to rebuild trust in voting, we must speak out every time we hear a lie. Americans deserve the most accurate information about every candidate for every election. Vote411 should become a common phrase known in every household in the United States. A Democracy Defense Fund is necessary for us to combat voter suppression bills at the state and national level. Finally, we must continue the fight for Fair Maps across the United States. It is the duty of every League of Women Voters member to stand up and speak out to family members, and friends who do not speak the truth about our elections. Call out any, and all attacks on our democracy, whether in person, or online. As long as you do so in an educational/informative manner, you are doing the right thing for your League, and for your country's democracy!

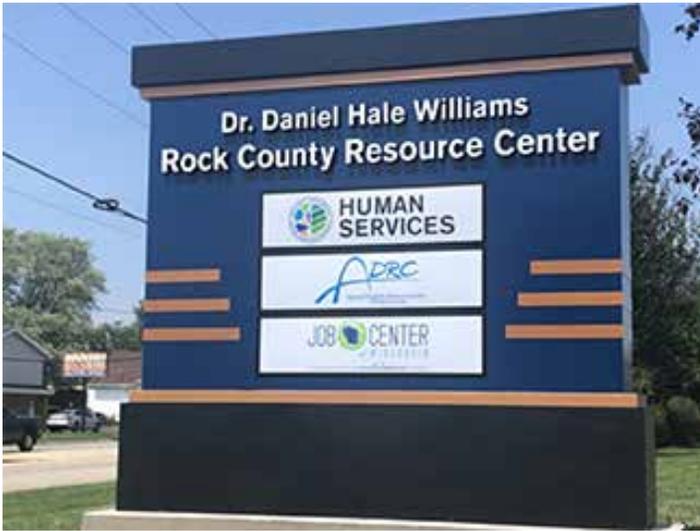


Linda Reinhardt, photos

Affordable Housing Forum

The forum was held last month at the Hedberg Public Library, a joint program with Hedberg and the League. The photos above show the Presenter.

Many Rock County services have a new face, a new location!



Mary Beulow, photos
Signage on Center Street at the parking lot entrance.



Mary Beulow, photos
Dr Daniel Hale Williams Resource Center's west entrance, facing Center Street

Most Rock County agencies are in a new location! The Rock County Job Center, Aging and Disability Resource Center, Human Services Division, and Treatment Court Services are now consolidated at a newly remodeled building at 1717 Center Avenue. These services were previously provided at the Health Care Center, Franklin St., Court St., and the Job Center (old K-Mart building).

Here are some tips to get to know the new building:

- 1717 Center Avenue is located between Dvorak's landscaping and A&W
- There are three entrances – west, south, and north.
- The west entrance (Center St) is closest to Human Services activities. This includes counseling and other behavioral health services, as well as services for children, youth and families.
- The south entrance (Conde St) is closest to the Job Center and the Aging and Disability Resource Center

(ADRC).

- The north entrance is the smallest. This is for Drug Treatment Court services.
- The JTS bus stops at the south (Conde St) entrance. There is a covered bus shelter near the door.
- The parking lot is closest to the west (Center St) entrance.

If you are attending an event in one of the conference rooms, use the west (Center St) entrance and turn right.

If you enter the “wrong” door, you can easily get to the section of the building you want. You just have to walk farther.

Hedberg Public Library has a remote book drop is on the west side of the parking lot, away from the building and close to Center Avenue.

The building looks nothing like the old Pick n Save grocery store that used to be in that location!

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.



The Board Of
Directors for 2021-22 is:

President—Linda Reinhardt

VP—Deb Kolste

Secretary—Renee Kalvestrand

Treasurer—Laura Peterson

Directors: Deb Griffith, Lisa Johnson, Heide
Keith, Sue Scott

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>