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League of
Women
Voters of
Iowa

Empowering
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President's Message

By Terese Grant, LWVIA President

It has been a very busy summer for the League of Women Voters of Iowa.

We held an in-person Council event in early June in Cedar Falls hosted by the League of Women Voters of Black Hawk-Bremer Counties. We were fortunate to hear remarks from the League of Women Voters of the U.S. Board President Dr. Deborah Turner, who focused on "Making Democracy Work."

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Rally for Reproductive Freedom

League of Women Voters of Linn County members Myrna and Jim Loehrlein attended the lowans for Reproductive Freedom rally at the Iowa State Capitol on July 10. Here are a few of Myrna Loehrlein's observations:

It was a hot day, but there were several hundred, maybe as many as 1,000 people, at the rally's height.

It was a true coalition, as many of the speakers came from different perspectives.

A rally is a good way to begin, but persistent action will be needed to resolve the question on reproductive rights here in Iowa.

Thank you to all of our League members who rallied for reproductive freedom!

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We were introduced to our newest League, League of Women Voters of North Iowa, by remarks from their Board member Jessica Tierney. Janet Carl, who is a part of the lowans for Responsible Gun Laws coalition, gave an informative presentation. Our keynote speaker was Chris Larimer, Professor of Political Science at UNI. It was a very positive and informative event.

At the end of June, the League of Women Voters of the U.S. Convention was held in Denver. A total of eighteen League members from various local Leagues in Iowa, as well as three State Board members, attended. On Friday of the convention, the decision to overturn Roe v. Wade was announced. Dr. Deborah Turner focused on this decision in her address to the convention. She gave a powerful and inspirational speech that was one of the highlights of the entire convention. The speeches and all of the caucus events will eventually be available to all League members in the weeks to come.

On Sunday, July 10, the League of Women Voters of Iowa joined many other organizations to sponsor an lowans for Reproductive Freedom rally at the Iowa State Capitol in Des Moines. The League registered voters, and Carolyn Klaus, President of the League of Women Voters of Ames and Story County, registered over 30 people to vote. She was joined by fellow League members from Ames, Judy Jones and Mary Richards; as well as Christie Gerken and John Olsen from the League of Women Voters of Metro Des Moines. Myrna and Jim Loehrlein from the League of Women Voters of Linn County also attended the rally. Great speakers provided inspiration and encouraged everyone to vote in the upcoming elections. We know that this event is only a beginning, as we will continue to advocate for women's access to reproductive health.

The lowans for Responsible Gun Laws coalition is working to "Defeat the Reckless Gun Amendment" that will be on the ballot this November 8. The League of Women Voters of Iowa is one of the coalition's partners. The goal is to inform lowans to vote No on the Amendment and to allow common sense gun laws to be enacted by the Legislature in the future. We all need to do whatever we can to educate our League members, family, and friends about this initiative.

The work of the League is as important as ever as we continue to *Empower Voters and Defend Democracy!*



League of Women Voters of Sioux City Petitions for Early Voting Sites

Due to the 2021 election laws changes, early voting satellite sites can only be set up if there is a petition request. The petition requires 100 signatures from the county's citizens.

The League of Women Voters of Sioux City collected 276 signatures at various events during May and June.

In the photo above, League of Women Voters of Sioux City President Dagna Simmons is presenting Woodbury County Auditor Pat Gill with the petition signatures.

The petition overview is provided by the Iowa Secretary of State here: sos.iowa.gov/elections/pdf/forms/satellitepet.pdf

2022 LWVIA Council Meeting Highlights

By Nancy Halvorson, LWVIA Vice President

The League of Women Voters of Iowa 2022 Council Meeting on June 4, 2022, included nearly 50 in-person attendees, 10 virtual attendees, and 24 voting delegates from amongst the in-person and virtual attendees.

Please read the President's Message on pages 1-2 for an overview of the speakers who joined us at Council.

Criminal and Juvenile Justice Committee (CJJC) Chair Myrna Loehrlein presented on Bringing Economic Justice to the Justice System, and committee member Bonnie Pitz presented background for a Proposal for Study on Financing of the Justice System in Iowa by the Criminal and Juvenile Justice Committee.

Bonnie Pitz made the motion that the proposal for the Study on Financing of the Justice System in Iowa be approved, and Myrna Loehrlein seconded the motion. A vote was called, and the motion passed by a unanimous vote by delegates.

It was moved and seconded that the proposed PMP increases (\$5.00 for primary membership, \$2.50 for additional in household, and \$2.50 for student membership) be approved to begin on July 1, 2023. The motion carried with 22 in favor and two opposed.

Nominating Committee Chair Mary Rae Bragg presented the slate for 2022-2024:

Nominees for Board of Directors

Linda Hagedorn, Director

Shannon Patrick, Treasurer

Nominees for Re-election

Nancy Halvorson, Vice President

Jean McMenimen, Director

Motion made and seconded; all were elected by unanimous vote.

(Continued on page 4)



LWVUS Convention

Thank you to our League of Women Voters of Iowa delegates who represented us at the League of Women Voters of the U.S. Convention on June 23 - 26, 2022, in Denver, Colorado! Pictured above from left to right are Dhuha Tawil, Miriam Timmer-Hackert, Linda Hagedorn, Carolyn Klaus, Myrna Loehrlein, Linda Santi, Nancy Porter, and Tamara Prenosil.



With the overturning of Roe v. Wade happening during the convention, League members from across the U.S. rallied at the Colorado State Capitol in Denver. Pictured above are Nancy Porter, LWVUS President Dr. Deborah Turner, and Tess McFarland-Porter.

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League of Women Voters of Dubuque President Tamara Prenosil announced that the 2023 League of Women Voters of Iowa Convention will be held in Dubuque on June 9-10, 2023.

Everything went quite well and on schedule throughout the day. We managed to end right on time.

I would also like to mention how grateful I am for the enthusiasm of our membership in attendance, as well as for the leadership of our League of Women Voters of Iowa President Terese Grant. A special thanks as well to our Communications Director, Melissa Gesing, who went above and beyond to assist us with getting the information out to our members and assisting us with numerous questions along the way. Additionally, she was on hand and involved directly with technical issues that day.

Now, let's start looking forward and making plans to attend Convention 2023!

EPA Says Even Extremely Low Levels of PFAS in Drinking Water May Be Unsafe

By Kevin Loria, a science journalist who covers health for Consumer Reports - June 15, 2022

The Environmental Protection Agency on June 15 released new drinking water health advisories for four per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances, or PFAS. These health advisories are not legal limits, but they are meant to communicate the level of exposure above which negative health effects can occur.

PFAS - known as forever chemicals, since they generally don't break down or do so extremely slowly - have been widely used for decades in a wide variety of water- and grease-proof products like nonstick cookware, carpets, clothing, and outdoor gear. Because of that, they are ubiquitous, commonly found in the environment and in the blood of nearly all Americans.

The agency's announcement is an important step toward reducing contamination from these chemicals, according to experts.

The Wheel of Voting

By Cherie Dargan, League of Women Voters of Black Hawk-Bremer Counties President

The League of Women Voters of Black Hawk-Bremer Counties has a new secret weapon for doing voter registration: a colorful wheel that people spin - just like on a game show! Then, a League volunteer asks them questions about voting. Correct answers earn them a Lifesaver candy. After previous experiences of sitting at our table and watching people walk by, we knew we needed something interactive.

I found the wheel on Amazon (WinSpin 12 Inch Prize Wheel Dual Use Tabletop or Wall Mounted Spinning Wheel, 12 Slots Fortune Design Carnival Spin Game, \$39), located a list of questions asked of new citizens, and we were set. You will want to include some simple questions for children. Example: How old must you be to vote?

It was a success! The set up at Hudson days showed us the potential. It drew people to the table, including children, so our volunteers had plenty of opportunities to interact and educate. At the end of the weekend, I received a phone call from someone asking, "Can you buy a second wheel?"

My eleven-year-old grandson put together both wheels and answered most of the civics questions correctly! He dubbed it "The Wheel of Voting."



Questions from the United States Immigration Services - downloadable PDF:

<https://www.uscis.gov/sites/default/files/document/questions-and-answers/100q.pdf>

Rock the Vote FAQs to use for questions:

<https://www.rockthevote.org/how-to-vote/voting-faqs/>



LWVIA Launches New Website

By Melissa Gesing, LWVIA Communications Director

The new lwvia.org website is now live! We hope you enjoy navigating this new site, and we look forward to sharing our new look with people who are interested in League.

A few notes regarding the new site:

- You will notice that this site has fewer pages. Not to worry: We kept the information from the old website in our archives and will be making that available to our members through an online file sharing system in the upcoming months. We streamlined the new site to make it relevant and user friendly for those who want to know more about League.
- Your web browser may try to pull up pages from the old website. While our home page link - lwvia.org - is the same, the subpages are now tied to different links. Simply go to lwvia.org and navigate to the various pages from there. Your browser will eventually remember the new page links instead of the old ones.
- We will be adding a PayPal button to the site, thus enabling the online donation feature, very soon!

Please help us keep this new website up-to-date by emailing your League meeting and event information, as well as local League leadership changes and contact information, directly to me at lwviowa@gmail.com.

LWVUS DEI Webinar: Recording and Materials

By Nancy Porter, LWVIA delegate to the LWVUS Convention

We were not able to hear Dr. Sally Roesch Wagner as planned at the convention because we ran out of time. We truly were trying to make up for meeting time lost during COVID. You may certainly benefit from this scholarly presentation.

A recording of the session is available here: https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/8o3oMluTjfPRfKrCnVmVRHjMt_YcwuQ0HqAfzSXv2ooXqbnh9O8XIfnG4GI0SX1z.c-sMrrO7wEaFuobd?startTime=1658444703000.

The following resources were mentioned throughout the webinar:

<https://sallyroeschwagner.com/>

<https://sallyroeschwagner.com/store>

<https://matildajoslyngage.org/online-gift-shop/ols/products/women-church-and-state>

<https://www.bia.gov/service/tribal-consultations/indian-boarding-school-initiative>

<https://www.haudenosauneeconfederacy.com/who-we-are/>

<https://www.ualberta.ca/admissions-programs/online-courses/indigenous-canada/index.html>

<https://milkweed.org/book/braiding-sweetgrass>

<https://www.pbs.org/filmfestival/films/without-a-whisper>

LWVUS Convention: Ranked Choice Voting

By Myrna Loehrlein, LWVIA delegate to the LWVUS Convention

In the United States, we use a method of voting called "plurality" voting. It means "whoever gets the most wins." The result of this method a win/lose, us/them, situation that is feeding the tribalism and partisanship this country currently suffers from.

Often, the winning candidate is not the candidate preferred by a majority of the voters. This is very often true when there are more than two candidates, but write-ins and failure of voters to vote in every race on the ballot can give this result with a two-candidate race as well.

If you voted for the person who didn't get the most, your vote counts for nothing. If your vote were a cookie, you could watch it get tossed in the trash. You may have heard extensive discussions about electability and voters worried about wasting their vote.

With Ranked Choice Voting (RCV), neither of these is a problem, and the successful candidate will always be supported by a majority of the voters – even if he/she is their second or third choice.

Here's how it works:

Imagine you are given a cookie and three colors of napkin to put it on. Let's say red, yellow, and blue. You choose red. Out of 100 voters, 25 choose red, 40 choose yellow, and 36 choose blue. NO majority. So – everyone throws their red napkin away, and those on red napkins move to yellow or blue. 17 go to yellow giving it 57; 8 go to blue giving it 44. Yellow wins, a majority has been achieved, and everybody eats their cookie in celebration.

You only had one vote/cookie, but RCV lets you use it to help ensure a winner with majority support. No vote is lost; all stay active throughout the process.

The result is far less tribalism and animosity since no candidate can afford to make an enemy of any voter. Each candidate needs all voters in case they are needed for their second choice. The result is less partisanship, better ballot access to third party or independent candidates, more willingness to compromise, and a bunch of other desirable outcomes.

More can be learned about RCV. You might consider it as a topic for one of your League meetings in the future.

Iowans Support Responsible Gun Laws

91%

91% of Iowans support banning carrying a firearm while under the influence of drugs or alcohol

85%

85% of Iowans support prohibiting felons from possessing firearms

85%

85% of Iowans support requiring background checks on all gun purchases

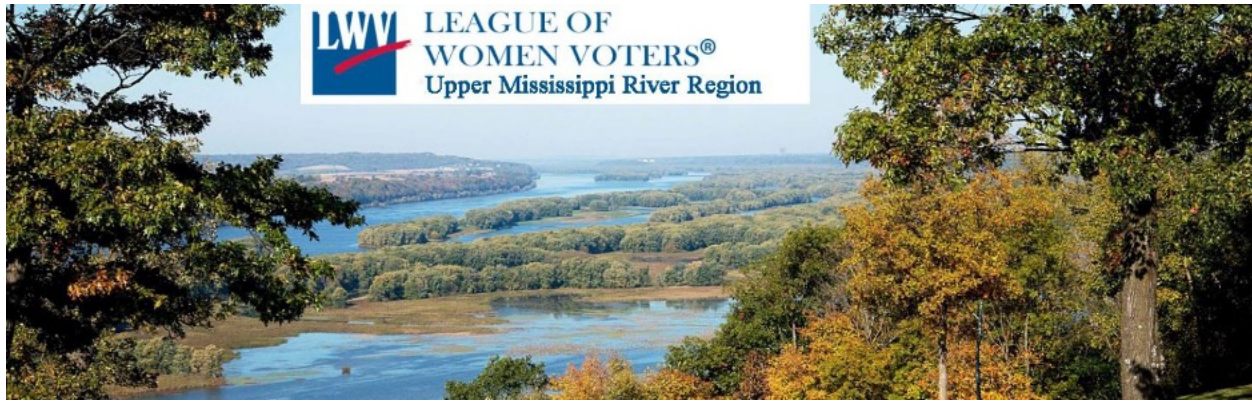
83%

83% of Iowans support requiring gun safety courses before the purchase of a handgun

Check out the Iowans for Responsible Gun Laws website to read more and sign up:

iowansforresponsiblegunlaws.com

Source: *Iowans for Responsible Gun Laws*



LWV UMRR Program for Action 2022-23

LWV UMRR is uniquely positioned - we are a multi-state League focused on protecting and enhancing the Mississippi River. The people in our League are active, engaged and passionate, and are also involved in other organizations, giving us a broad base of knowledge about what's happening around us.

Now it's time to take advantage of our unique position to lead our Leagues in advocating for the Mississippi as big federal bills like the Farm Bill, MRRRI and SMRT boil through Congress. This draft program for action takes the work we've done together and points us toward our work for the future.

To do this, LWV UMRR proposes to:

Build upon the affiliations LWV UMRR members have in other LWV's and other organizations focused on the Mississippi to seek opportunities to advocate for the river in a broad, national context.

Lead LWV in supporting federal legislation to protect the Mississippi River's quality and quantity:

- Mississippi River Restoration and Resilience Initiative - introduced, but stalled
- Safeguarding our Mississippi River Together - introduced, but stalled - 2023 Farm Bill (reauthorized every five years)

Work with our member state Leagues and LWV US to build effective advocacy based on LWV positions, and partner with organizations actively working on these bills.

The League of Women Voters Upper Mississippi River Region is a four-state organization, composed of more than sixty local and State LWV's from the Mississippi Headwaters in northern Minnesota to the river's confluence with the Ohio in southern Illinois. We focus on education and advocacy to protect and enhance water quality in the Upper Mississippi.

