



THE VOTER

Empowering Voters. Defending Democracy.

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President's Message

By Terese Grant, LWVIA President

It has been an "unprecedented" year in so many ways: in our personal and family lives, in business, in our communities, and, of course, in the League of Women Voters. In all of these areas, there have been highs and lows, good and bad, success and failure, happiness and sadness. We have experienced it all - and we have survived. In spite of a Covid-19 pandemic, the LWV of Iowa is strong.

One of the most important tasks of the LWV in Iowa is our effort to encourage participation in the voting process. We do this by registering voters, hosting candidate forums, and with our website Vote411. With a grant from a generous donor to Get Out the Vote, each local league was given \$200 in their efforts for the November election.

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2021 LWVIA Convention

Thanks to everyone who attended the virtual convention on June 12. We had 67 delegates in attendance with two alternates and 22 guests. All of the local leagues were represented, and each president shared important events from the past year. The highlight of the day was the keynote address by LWVUS President Dr. Deborah Turner. We were also fortunate to have LWVUS board member Melissa Currence give a presentation on how to become more involved with the League. Our lobbyist Amy Campbell spoke about our legislative wins and losses. Overall, it was a great learning experience for all who attended. PowerPoint presentations and other documents from the convention may be found at lwvia.org/meetingandconventiondocs.



League of Women Voters of Black Hawk and Bremer Counties President Cherie Dargan proudly models her vote jewelry that she wore to the virtual convention. Cherie found the jewelry on Etsy, and the pieces were made by Judy Standerford - lwvorangeoast.etsy.com.

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We had an additional task in educating voters in how to request and fill out an absentee ballot because voters were uneasy about going to the polls in person with Covid-19. The grant allowed us to buy and place ads on Iowa PBS, Iowa Public Radio, Radio Iowa, Heart Media, and on various social media platforms. All of these ads shared a similar message of encouraging everyone to vote. As a result, Iowans broke the all-time turnout record for a general election that was set in 2012. This was definitely a huge success for the people of Iowa.

The LWV of Iowa agreed to participate in Year 2 of the People Powered Fair Maps Campaign which is focused on Redistricting. Since Iowa has a nonpartisan process for redistricting, our goal has been to educate Iowans on this process. On March 18, we partnered with the Drake Law School and hosted an event, "Iowa's Process of Redistricting, The Nation's Gold Standard". Ed Cook, from the Legislative Services Agency, gave a presentation on the history and the process of redistricting. We worked with a video production company who produced three two-minute YouTube videos on the Iowa redistricting process. Three different sites were used with different trios of actors or students from Grinnell. The topics were what is reapportionment and redistricting; why is Iowa's process known as the Gold Standard in the U.S.; and what is gerrymandering. We feel that our efforts are helping everyone to understand this very important process that happens every ten years.

Since early January we have been focused on the 2021 Legislative Session and have been working on the Legislative Priorities that were created in the fall. In order to advocate for these issues, we created Task Forces: Redistricting, Justice (Mandatory Sentencing), Environment (Bottle Bill), Health (Mental Health), Workforce (Broadband and Child Care), and Accountability in Government and Election Regulations. These individual Task Forces have brought together members from a variety of Leagues across the state to advocate and monitor bills during the Legislative Session. There has been some success, but most have met with serious challenges this year with one party controlling both the House and the Senate. One of the major disappointments was the Election Integrity bill that will greatly restrict voting for Iowans in future elections. Other issues that the League opposed were the bans on diversity training, charter schools, the bottle bill, and more. With the conclusion of the Legislative Session in 2021, we will come back in 2022 ready to once again advocate for the issues that are important to our mission of "Empowering Voters and Defending Democracy."

We know that we have much to do going forward. Our work will need the commitment of League members at the state and local level. I will close with a quote from Past President Mary Rae Bragg's message from the 2019 Convention: "For the League of Women Voters, we need to look to our history. It has never been easy to change hearts and minds, but with hard work, sound reasoning and a bit of ingenuity, we can make a difference. As our foremothers persisted, so shall we!"



21-Day Equity Challenge

Conventional wisdom says it takes about three weeks to form a new habit, so Dr. Eddie Moore, Dr. Marguerite Penick-Parks and Debby Irving developed the [21-Day Racial Equity Challenge](#) to help all of us cultivate self-awareness and intentionality to effect social change.

Local United Ways across the country and the state of Iowa have spearheaded this challenge in our communities. Many League members have participated in these challenges and various equity conversations throughout the past year and a half.

League of Women Voters of Metro Des Moines hosted a book discussion of *Caste* by Isabel Wilkerson.

League of Women Voters of Johnson County recently participated in the Privilege Walk as part of Day 4 of the 21-Day Equity Challenge.

More information about privilege and a video about the walk can be found here:

<https://www.unitedwaydm.org/equity-challenge-day-4>

League of Women Voters of Ottumwa Sponsors Public Education Forum

On Saturday, May 15, 2021, League of Women Voters of Ottumwa sponsored a public education forum at Indian Hills Community College.

“The focus was not on legislation but was focused on all aspects and influences of public education on the daily lives of constituents,” said League of Women Voters of Ottumwa President Mary Stewart.

“The intent was to help people make the connection between their vote, the legislation that is passed by those they elected, and the effects of that legislation on them and on their district and state. I think we accomplished that.”

— Sponsored By — **LWV** LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF OTTUMWA



July 4th Parades Feature Local Leagues

League of Women Voters of Ames and Story County participated in the July 4th Ames parade. The suffrage wagon replica was a big hit:



League of Women Voters Johnson County dressed as the suffragists and walked in the Coralville July 4th parade:



Linda Schreiber Receives Carrie Chapman Catt Award at LWVIA Convention

The Carrie Chapman Catt Award was presented to Linda Schreiber, LWV Johnson County, during the LWVIA convention on June 12, 2021. The Carrie Chapman Catt Award is a tribute to the recipient's years of excellence in contributing to their community and to League and its governing principles.

Linda Schreiber was born in Des Moines, Iowa, and raised on her family's century farm in Warren County. She moved to Iowa City where she earned a B.B.A. in Business Administration, majoring in human resource management and marketing and a master's degree in Communication and Journalism from the University of Iowa. Now retired, Linda worked as an administrator, journalist and editor. She is the author of "Before 52340: A Place in Time," which describes 100 years of settlement in Clear Creek Township and Tiffin, Iowa, from the mid-1800s to the 1950s. All proceeds from her book were donated to the Springmier Community Library, a partnership between the Clear Creek Amana School District and Tiffin that she helped establish as a Clear Creek Amana School Board member.

Today, Linda spends her time writing, gardening and volunteering to assist nonprofit organizations. Linda has received the Governor's Volunteer Award by Gov. Terry Branstad in recognition of her gardening efforts in Downtown City Gardens. She was also featured in the Iowa Women's Foundation's Ovation for her volunteer efforts.

Linda served two terms on the LWVJC Board of Directors where she dedicated her journalistic skills to a long list of LWVJC communication projects. She continues to be active as a journalist and organizer behind the scenes. Linda assembles the VOTER and prepares professional news releases for League activities. She has developed caucus training guides, given the League a Facebook presence and helped to write or rewrite documents central to our League's operation: bylaws, a Member Orientation Guide and a LWVIA Tax Increment Financing Study Report. As an event organizer, Linda secured speakers whose topics aligned squarely with LWVIA's legislative priorities: civil rights, voting rights, the importance of a free press, affordable housing and the bottle bill. During the League's 100th anniversary, Linda helped the Century of Impact Committee raise funds for its commemorative programs, track collaborative projects, and promote presentations while keeping donors updated and informed.

For nearly 40 years, Linda lived in rural Johnson County with her husband Steve; they moved to Iowa City in 2012. They are the parents of John Mosher and grandparents to John and Joanna's two daughters, Eva and Zoe.



The Mighty Mississippi

Nancy Porter, LWVIA Board of Directors

MRN (Mississippi River Network: 1Mississippi)

UMRRILO (Upper Mississippi River Region InterLeague Organization)



The Johnson County and Dubuque League of Women Voters had a great time spending the grant money furnished by the Mississippi River Network in June celebrating the Mississippi River. MRN paid for the lunches. Dubuque LWV met on June 14 at the beautiful Eagle Point State Park. The view of the River was spectacular and watching the pelicans fish and the water fall over the dam at the lock was relaxing and encouraging.

Special thanks to **Tamara Prenosil** for arrangements and **Sue Wilson**, both Upper Mississippi River Region-InterLeague Organization (UMRR-ILO) board members. We filled the shelter with LWV members and non members and enjoyed a box lunch.

Tim Wagner presented a very interesting and educational talk on the role healthy soil plays in keeping our waters clean and useable. He recently retired from the Isaac Walton League of Iowa after many years of being an environmental activist.



State **Senator Chuck Isenhardt** gave us an overview of the Iowa legislature and its lack of encouraging healthy soil and waters. He spoke of the legislative environmental group. Perhaps your legislator serves with Chuck and **Mary Mascher** and others to teach needed environmental strategies to our farmers. (Ask them. This certainly fits with our Outreach program.) **Senator Pam Jochum** also attended the noon day event.



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On June 15 **Sue and Michael Johannsen**, LWV of Muscatine County, joined the Johnson County League on a trip to Clinton, Iowa. We walked along the Mississippi and planned to walk across the bridge when the construction/repair is completed. We dined at the CandleLight Inn, on the patio overlooking the Mississippi. It was such a delightful experience we are anxious to return. **Tim Wagner** joined us and again presented his healthy soil program at the Eagle Point City Park in Clinton.



Both parks are a result of the Civilian Conservation Corps New Deal (CCC) promoted by President Roosevelt. This resembles the program President Biden is planning.

The newsletter from MRN (<https://mississippirivernetwork.salsalabs.org/julyrcnewsletter>) gives statistics on how successful the Celebration of the Mississippi River was. More than 40 events and 59 organizations - with 33 of those belonging to the MRN - promoted, taught and enjoyed the river. A true demonstration of the power of outreach and involvement from many. Plenty of signatures were collected to help Congresswoman Betty McCollum present her **Mississippi River Restoration & Resilience Initiative (MRRRI)** as a bill. Go to the newsletter link provided above to contact your congressional representatives to urge them to support this initiative that is long overdue. Enjoy our river, but help save it, too! Feel free to join MRN as an individual, although your LWV membership entitles you access to this organization.

Happy to serve; glad to help. Contact me anytime at nancy55555@icloud.com. (Please put MRN or LWV in subject line.)



Who knew fun along the Mississippi River included an exercise park!?

League of Women Voters of Johnson County Engagement Committee

The Johnson County Engagement Committee met at Big Grove Brewery on June 29 to discuss future educational program needs, the bottle bill, the difficulty in bill tracking and the wonderful committed work by Amy and Craig, our LWVIA lobbyists. We were blessed with updates and news from the Capitol in Des Moines although it was not generally what we wanted to hear.

The hats worn that evening for our first in-person gathering of the year (pandemic 15-month year) were provided by Jean Loyd-Jones in recognition of the hard work done by the 19th Amendment Centennial Commemoration Committee.



Pictured from left to right: Gaylen Wobeter; Shannon Patrick, committee chair; Polly Horton; Cathy Eisenhofer; and Paula Vaughan, LWVJC Co-President
Photographer: Nancy Porter

A bit more on “gerrymandering” and redistricting...how Iowa is gold!

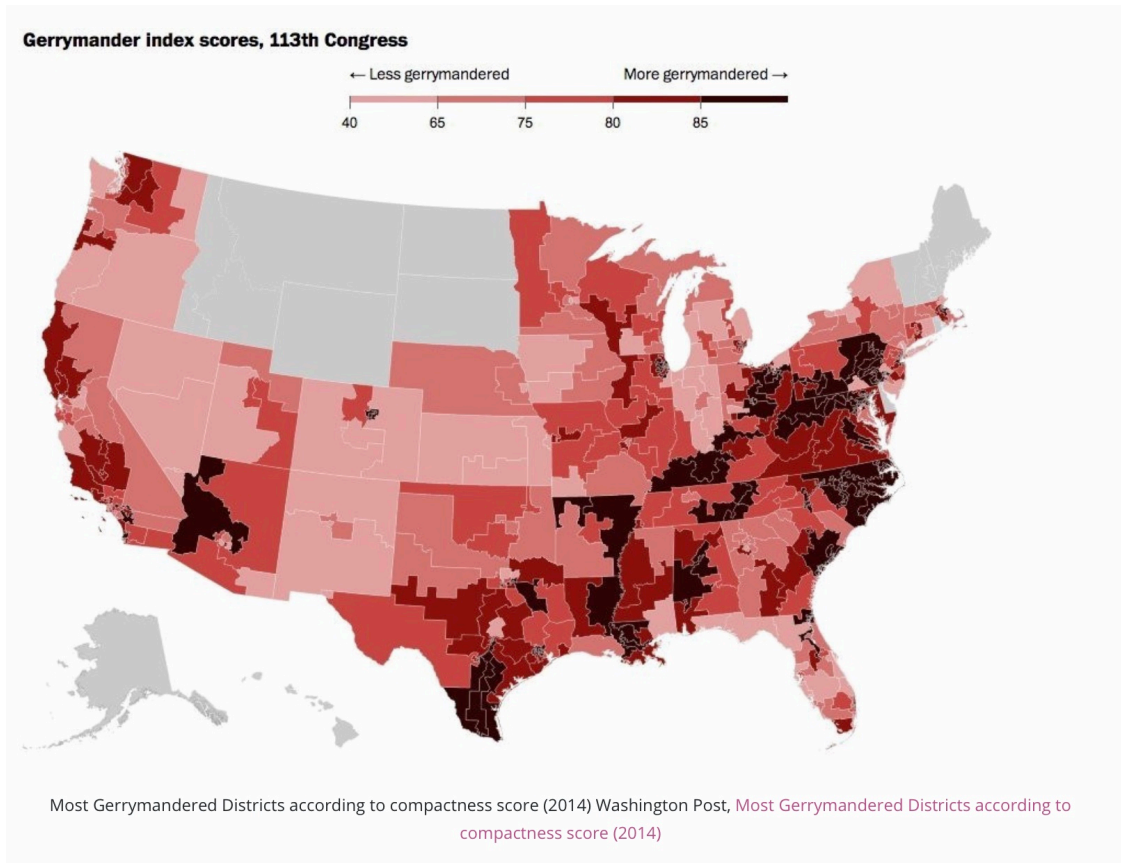
Linda Meloy, LWVIA Redistricting Committee

Gerrymandering is a term that originated in 1812 when a Massachusetts governor, last name Gerry, was running for re-election and his party controlled the Legislature. That Legislature drew state Senate districts to keep the other party in the minority, with the resulting districts in strange-looking shapes. A newspaper cartoon morphed one of the districts into a winged and clawed salamander, labeled “The Gerrymander, a new species of monster”. Governor Gerry lost his re-election bid, but the term for distorted political districts aimed at keeping incumbents in office has lived on for over two hundred years!

Luckily, we here in Iowa have less to worry about in regard to the gerrymandering of our congressional and legislative districts due to our Iowa Redistricting Process. That process is handled by the non-partisan Legislative Services Agency with specific rules and guidelines to follow in map construction that were established by statutory law in 1981. Thus, our process is considered the U.S. Gold Standard for Redistricting, also known as Reapportionment.

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Other states are not in as good a shape in regard to compliance with the 1964 U.S. Supreme Court decision in Reynolds v. Sims, known as the “one man, one vote decision. The ten worst states for this non-compliance and thus gerrymandering (North Carolina, Maryland, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Utah, Texas, Arkansas, and Ohio), with maps illustrating the lack of compactness* in their districts, can be found at rantt.com/the-top-10-most-gerrymandered-states-in-america .

*Areas where the interests of a particular demographic are diluted by dividing those constituents up, or by condensing them into fewer districts, so a party wins less seats overall, known as “packing” or “cracking”, and many times resulting in strange, skinny-shaped, or sprawling districts.

Currently LWVIA is continuing our public education campaign to let lowans know of our acclaimed redistricting process, how it works, and why we need to make sure it remains intact.

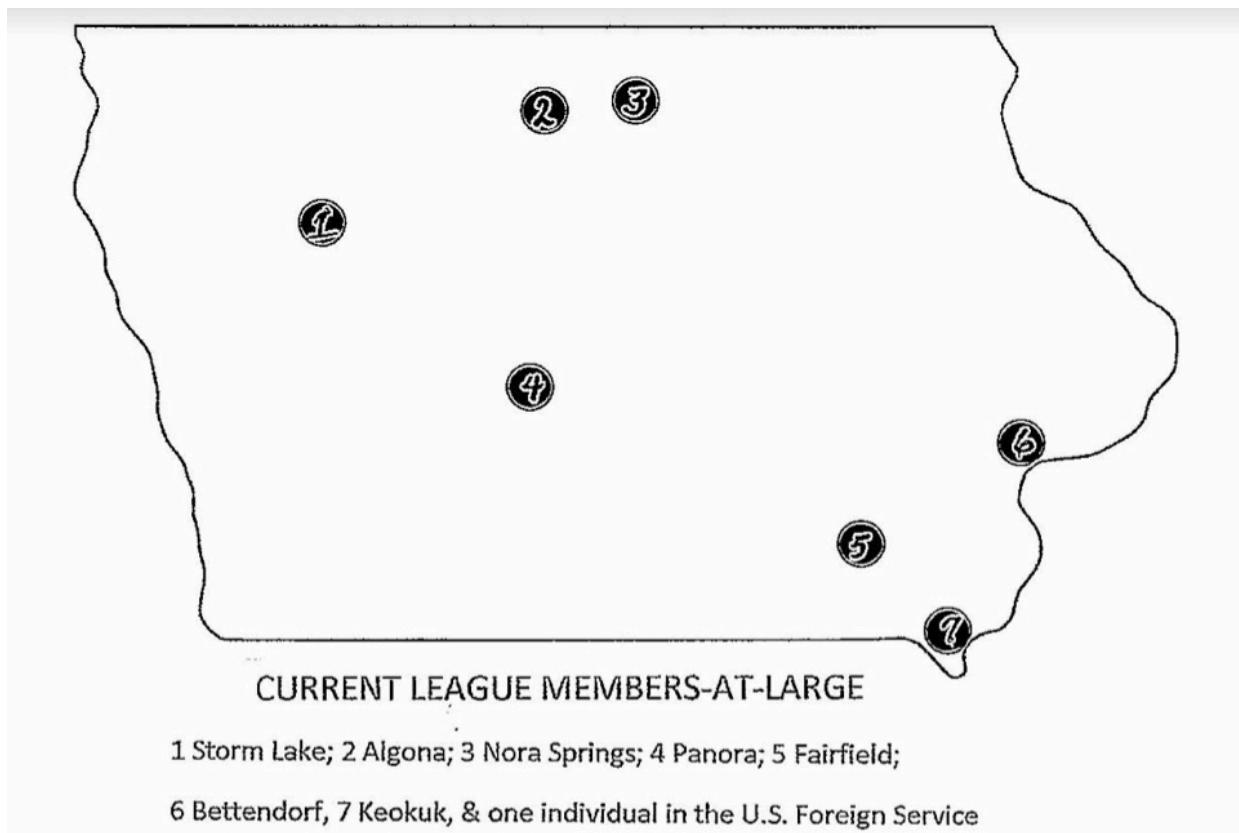
Our 8th Member-at-Large!

By Linda Meloy, LWWIA Treasurer

Susan Marty of Bettendorf joined us this past March and we welcome her to the League! As a liberal arts graduate of Colorado College, Susan has a variety of employment experiences from a ski ambassador at Sun Valley Idaho to marketing officer at First Chicago. Trained as a nurse, she worked briefly in the field and as a facilitator for Junior Achievement. She is the wife of a Lutheran pastor and, while being a stay-at-home mom, has been involved in their community in a LOT of volunteer work: Habitat for Humanity, the QC Food Bank and their church's Food Pantry, classroom mentor, and numerous mission trips to Appalachia.

Both adult children and their spouses live in Colorado, where the first grandchild, 8 month-old Louis, is providing much joy to the entire family! His daddy, a Colby College graduate, is a graphic designer and his auntie works in apparel merchandising (Colorado State graduate).

Susan has concerns for the growing restrictions on access to voting, which has brought her to the League. She wants to learn what she needs to know to register voters in Scott County, as well as be part of any League action strategies for empowering voters.



IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY
 Carrie Chapman Catt Center for Women and Politics

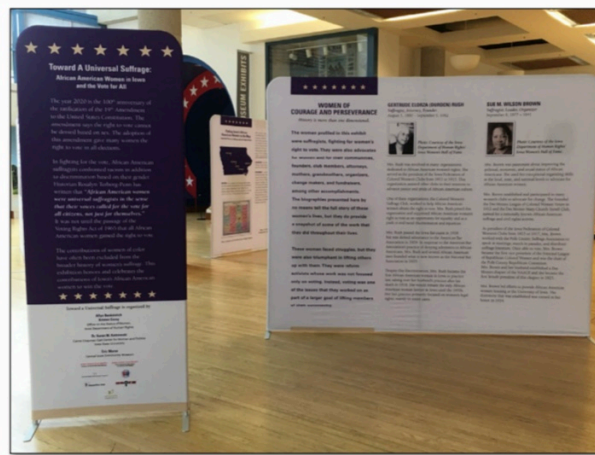
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Celebrate Iowa’s diversity and history with an exhibit about Iowa’s African American suffragists

“Toward a Universal Suffrage: African American Women in Iowa and the Vote for All” is a traveling exhibit that honors and celebrates the contributions of African American women in Iowa to the women’s suffrage movement.

The exhibit includes:

- Profiles of five African American women in Iowa who were suffragists
- An overview of African American women’s suffrage
- A timeline and history of African American voting rights history
- A map of important African American suffrage locations in Iowa



“Toward a Universal Suffrage” was displayed at the State Historical Museum of Iowa in July 2020. Photo courtesy of the State Historical Society of Iowa.

The exhibit was created by the Carrie Chapman Catt Center for Women and Politics at Iowa State University, the Central Iowa Community Museum and the Iowa Department of Human Rights.

Cost

There is a \$50 rental fee for the exhibit. Host organizations are responsible for the transportation costs of delivering the exhibit to your site. These costs are \$200 for round-trip transportation or \$100 for one-way transportation. For one-way transportation, host sites are responsible for either picking up or dropping off the exhibit at the Catt Center.

Exhibit details

- The exhibit requires 600 square feet to display and provide room for traffic flow.
- The exhibit consists of five double-sided fabric display panels. One panel is 3 feet wide by 7.5 feet tall and the other four panels are 10 feet wide by 7.5 feet tall.
- This is a “poster exhibit.” No objects are included. Graphics and images are printed throughout.
- The exhibit, when disassembled, can be transported in the trunk of a car.
- The exhibit is insured by Iowa State University.

Make a reservation

To see the exhibit tour schedule, visit www.centraliowamuseum.com/exhibitions.

To reserve the exhibit, fill out the request form at <https://tinyurl.com/7m3pdrvk>. You can also use this QR code to access the form:

