

*OUR MISSION: Empowering Voters. Defending Democracy*



## **OUR VOICE**

**October 15, 2022**

### **What is MLD?**

The LWV-St Croix Valley is a relatively new chapter in Wisconsin. Formed through the dedication and determination of a core group of women, our chapter has grown to represent nearly seventy members spread across three counties. These core women educated themselves and shouldered the burden to get the ball rolling.

But how does a fledgling chapter keep pace with its rapidly growing membership and presence?

Enter the LWV State supported Member and Leadership Development (MLD) program for newly formed Leagues. Through a mentor assigned by the League of Women Voters–Wisconsin, newly formed Chapters profit from the experience and resources of our statewide agency. This mentorship program is exclusive to newly formed Chapters and is engaged for a limited duration. In certain circumstances extensions can provide continued support, but the goal is for our League officers to maximize this resource as needed.

League officers Beth Wood, Irene Bugge, and Chairperson Carolyn (and previously Susan Bosley and Barb Wetzel) have met with Marilyn Boeldt, the assigned mentor, since October, 2019.

The program's emphasis is to assist local Leagues in embracing and including members, developing proactive ways to draw in and welcome new members, as well as developing strong leaders and good leadership practices. The program is designed to reflect the individual needs of each unique chapter. One of the greatest challenges for a volunteer organization is in maintaining effective and sustainable leadership. Another challenge is the geographic challenge of a membership spread across a three county area. This program has been a lifeline to our chapter as we strategize how to fully engage members and create a cohesive chapter with these unique challenges.

According to Carolyn, "Our chapter has applied for the MLD Award three times and received the award three times (2020- second place, 2021- tied for first place, 2022- first place). I believe

receiving this award is due, in great part, to what we have learned from and incorporated into our League by participating in the MLD Mentoring Program.”

## NVRD and more! (voter services)



Thank you to all who volunteered to support voters in our area during National Voter Registration Day. Voter Services members continue to reach out with election information to various contacts, such as high schools, colleges, housing authorities, food shelves, ADRCs, nursing homes, etc.

*With only three weeks until election day there are opportunities to continue with voter education.*

**We encourage you to pick a place or choose an event to set up information for voter registration, just as you did for National Voter Registration day. Plan a ‘pop-up’ event—any day, any time. You may need to request permission in advance if you set up a table in front of a business. If you would like a ready-made box of supplies, contact Patty, Irene or Kay.** Contact event leadership and let Patty, Irene, or Kay know, and we will happily provide you with a ready-made box of supplies. If each volunteer, or team, could commit to share voter information **just one more time**, we could reach so many more people.

*This election is a big one, let's hit it hard*

**Kay 715-381-8879**

**Patty 651-271-9942**

## Final Five voting Events involve members/non-members

In an effort to involve more of our community in learning about Final Five voting, League members have organized several house parties.

Our emphasis is for all League members to not only have a working knowledge of basic Final Five voting, but also to spread that information to the community at large. We especially want to encourage folks from ‘both sides of the aisle’ to learn about Final Five voting. This is a non-partisan effort!

At this time, LWV SCV will emphasize education. As time goes on there may be a call to action for both LWV SCV members and community members.

***All League members should already be invited to one of these events—however, if you have not received a direct invite just contact party hosts for more information:***

**October 24**

St. Croix County House Party

Location: Table 65 Bistro & Gelato Cafe

729 N. Knowles Ave. New Richmond

Date: Monday, October 24 Time: 5:00-7:00 PM

RSVP to Beth or Vicki by October 17

Hosted by: Beth Wood, Edna Grotjahn Early, Marcy Armstrong Dorau, Vicki Harmon

**October 30**

Burnett County House Party

at the Siren Senior Community Center

23943 WI-35, just south of WI-70 stoplight

Date: Sunday, October 30 Time: 4:00-6:00 PM

RSVP to Pam or Carolyn by October 18 Hosted by: Pam & Dan Girtz and Carolyn Saunders

**November 1**

Polk County House Party (Highway 8 and south)

at the Osceola Senior Center

310 Chieftain St. (easy access off 4th Ave.)

Date: Tuesday, November 1 Time: 5:00-7:00 PM

RSVP to Irene or Carolyn by October 18 Hosted by: Irene Bugge, Robin Maercklein, and Carolyn Saunders

**November 2**

River Falls, Baldwin, and Woodville—

River Falls Public Library Meeting Room (on the right as you enter from the parking lot)

140 Union St., River Falls

Date: Wednesday, November 2 Time: 6:30-8:00 PM

RSVP to Janet by October 16 Hosted by: Janet Ellinger 612-817-9742

**November 5**

Northern Polk County- House Party

Kris Surbaugh residence

3189 100th St., Frederic

Date: Saturday, November 5 Time: 4:00- 6:00 PM

RSVP to Kris Surbaugh by October 22 Hosted by: Kris Surbaugh and Barb Katt

**November 10**

Hudson Area

Steve and Kathy Streitz residence

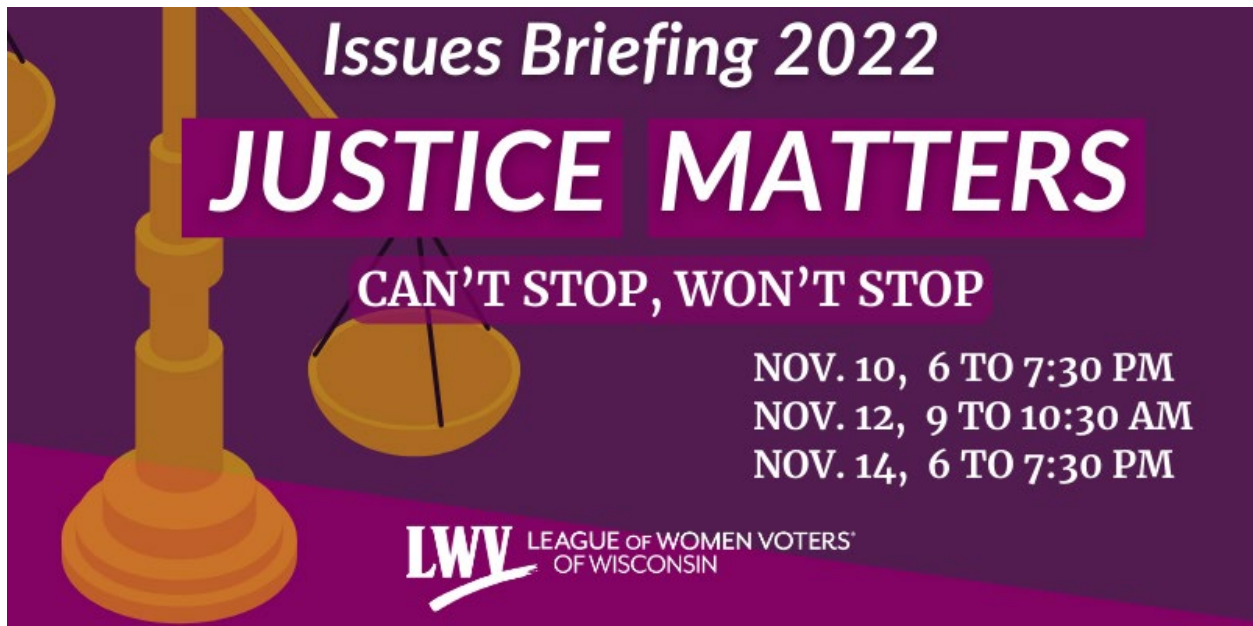
429 Krattley Ln. Hudson

Date: Thursday November 10 Time: 6:00PM

RSVP to Kathy by October 26 Hosted by: Steve and Kathy Streitz

**Member Opportunities!**

**Join Us!**



League members and friends are invited to attend *LWV WI's 2022 Virtual Issues Briefing* comprising a series of three programs presented on three different days. Please join us as we explore principles of justice in financing our elections, fighting for equal rights for women and protecting our environment. Learn why we can't and won't stop advocating for governmental, social and environmental justice issues until everyone is treated equally, fairly and with the human dignity we all deserve.

**Stay Informed:**

**ISSUES BRIEFING 2022 - "Justice Matters / Can't stop. Won't stop."**

Three sessions on three days with three different topics!  
**FREE REGISTRATION ~ GROW YOUR JUSTICE AWARENESS!**

Thursday, November 10 - 6:00-7:30pm

**Governmental Justice ~ "Money in Judicial Races"**

Speaker: Matt Rothschild

Saturday, November 12 - 9:00-10:30am

**Social Justice ~ "Assault on Women's Rights"**

Speaker: Dr. Elizabeth Griffith

Monday, November 14 - 6:00-7:30pm

**Environmental Justice ~ "PFAS Regulation & Water Quality"**

Speaker: Meleesa Johnson

**To Register:** <https://tinyurl.com/registerherelwv> (copy and paste in your search bar)

## Member Spotlight!

### Barb Wetzel

Founding member Barb Wetzel's story is also the story of our League of St. Croix Valley Chapter.

In 2015, Barb Wetzel and eight other women, interested in creating a non-partisan action group, joined together to form a new Wisconsin League Chapter for the Polk-Burnett area. Barb remembers asking herself, "What have we just committed ourselves to doing?" At the same time, she was excited to be a part of an organization which offered a way for people to build our democracy in a time when the political divide in our state and country was widening, Barb was eager to speak with neighbors and co-workers without a partisan pall.

Initially Barb, and the early core members, understood the League to be about the work of voter education and voter support. However, Andrea Kaminski, LWV-WI Executive Director at the time talked about building relationships, finding strength in decision making, creating community, becoming informed, taking a stand, having a voice, being an organization for all voters by embracing a non-partisan position at all times. Andrea encouraged those early members to embrace the possibilities the League offered.

Eventually, Barb served as Vice President of the League. Unsure of the role, she decided to focus on also being chair of the Nominating Committee. She wanted to build community in the League, so she decided she wanted to know all of the members. To do so, she took on the job of

calling each member and taking time to ask each one what attracted them to the League, what interested them, and what they had to offer through League work.

Those personal phone calls led Barb to a new role: chair of the Membership Committee. Barb's take on that committee was that it should have two areas of focus: finding and inviting new members, and providing support and encouragement to existing members. This led the committee to change its name to Member Services Committee.

In reflection, Barb is amazed at the depth and growth of our League. "When a suggestion is made, someone steps in and it takes off! So unlike how it was early on!" Barb said that our discussions around racism and white supremacy, our actions in ending gerrymandering, and our work to educate the public about Final Five Voting is more than she could ever envision.

Barb has witnessed a loosely organized group of women, who did not know each other, to a group of women and men who are committed to action.

Barb's hope for the future is that we continue to offer opportunities for learning, and our members feel connected with other members outside of their geographical area. In Barb's words, "Stronger communities make for stronger democracy. Individualism runs contrary to community. We build one another up by building community. Part of the reason for belonging to any organization is belonging to (the) community."

In September, our Board of Directors accepted, with gratitude for many years of service, Barb Wetzel's resignation as co-chair of the Member Services Committee. Barb may no longer have a leadership role in our League, but she is not going away!

Thank you, Barb, for building up our League community and for helping us remember who we are and what our communities, state and nation need us to be about!

## **FIND YOUR PLACE IN THE LEAGUE!**

**Voter Services Co-chairs:** Kay Brooks and Patty Van Nevel

**Member Services Co-chairs:** Nanette Del Monaco and Marla Olson

**Program Committee Chair:** Vicki Harmon

**Communication & Media Committee Chair:** Kris Surbaugh

**Budget Committee Chair:** Nancy Stewart

**Nominating Committee Chair:** Beth Wood

For more information check out our website: <https://lwwstcroixvalley.org/joinus/>

RENEW Membership Online: <https://lwstcroixvalley.org/membership/>