

2023-2024 Highlights

League of Women Voters of St. Croix Valley

The past year was a time of change in our chapter. There was a transition in leadership. There was new energy and creativity in our membership. One member, in a powerful display of our commitment to women's rights, designed and donated a Suffragist Quilt.

We made inroads in member engagement and strengthened and expanded our Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Justice (DEIJ) efforts. Our League focused on our core mission and experimented with new initiatives.

We hosted our first candidate forums since Covid as well as numerous voter education/registration events. Members reached out to high school and college youth and partnered with other grassroots organizations. We celebrated Fair Maps in Wisconsin.

Some of our favorite slogans for the year were: "We'll try anything once," aka "Test and Learn" and "Fun with the Fundamentals."

Core Mission

- **Candidate Forums.** Demonstrating our ability to facilitate important discussions, our chapter hosted three excellent forums for County Board of Supervisors candidates in contested races in Burnett, Polk and St. Croix Counties. Over one-hundred people attended these forums. (March, 2024)
- **Boards of Education.** League members contacted all Board of Education candidates running in contested races in our three-county area. Candidates provided written answers to questions and their answers were posted on our website. (March, 2024)
- **National Voter Registration Month Plus.** We hosted multiple voter education/registration events at libraries, schools, farmers markets and community events. (September, 2023 and ongoing)
- **Vote Signs.** League members displayed over 100 VOTE signs throughout the three-county area. Signs read: "VOTE," "VOTA" (Spanish), "Biinjwebinigen" (Ojibwe) "Vote Tuesday," "Vote from Home," and "Thank You Election Workers." (Ongoing)
- **Fair Maps.** On the day Fair Maps were signed into law, chapter members represented our League at a Fair Maps celebration with the Governor in Hudson, WI. This invitation, an acknowledgement of our League's significant involvement in local and statewide efforts to end gerrymandering in WI, was a proud moment for us. (February, 2024)

- **Amplification of Voter Information.** Nonpartisan information for voters is regularly updated on LWVSCV website, posted on social media and sent as Public Service Announcements to local newspapers and to ADRCs (Aging and Disability Resource Centers) in all three counties, as well as to representatives of the Tribes. (Ongoing)

Member Engagement and Education

- **The Values-Focused Conversations Project.** Members of the leadership team reached out to ½ of our membership. They listened and shared stories about the values that grounded their decisions to join the League. (March - May, 2023)
- **Book Study:** Members participated in an in-depth study of Diane Wilsons' *Spirit Car: Journey to a Dakota Past*. This novel gave insight into the era when Native American children were forcibly separated from their families and forbidden to exhibit their heritage. (May, 2023)
- **Issues Briefing Conversation.** League Members participated in in a Zoom conversation about the LWVWI Issues Briefings. The briefings centered around setting the stage for the 2024 election year and focused on redistricting, WI Constitutional Amendments plus overcoming barriers to voting and election administration challenges. (Nov. 2023)
- **Summer Picnics and Coffees for Fun and Purpose.** Two summer picnics at members' homes in Star Prairie and Grantsburg, plus coffees in all three Counties, brought members together to build connections. Grantsburg's picnic featured Bridge the Divide Representative, Danny Akenson who gave an update on Final Five Voting (FFV). Members also participated in a letter writing campaign for FFV. At a coffee, members took home League note cards to send thank you notes to their county clerks in observance of Election Heroes Day. (Picnics, July, August, 2023; coffees ongoing)
- **DEIJ Field Trip.** On a path to new awarenesses, members promoted a trip to the Minneapolis Institute of Art to see Jim Denomie's exhibit of paintings and sculptures. Denomie's work gave insights into a contemporary Ojibwe artist's perception of U.S. historical events impacting Native sensibilities and experiences. (November, 2023)
- **Winter Gathering.** The venue for the event, Riverwood Nature Center in Star Prairie, was decorated for the holidays. There was a carnival-like atmosphere with interactive displays including spinning wheels, the Civics Game, the Future Voter Storytime Toolkit, Member Services/Voter Services/DEIJ information, and prizes. The focus was on engaging and educating our members about the League and ways to become involved. (January, 2024)

- **Welcome Member PowerPoint.** Our PowerPoint tool to orient new members, reorient more seasoned members and educate prospective members was updated. The new PowerPoint is available on our website and is sent to all new members as part of their welcome packet. (Ongoing)
- **Bi-Monthly Newsletter – Our Voice.** Every 1st and 15th of the month, a flashy colorful newsletter written by multiple League members arrives in members' email. It is filled with information and photos taken at local League events along with a calendar of future opportunities for member engagement. It has become a touchstone and a major way we communicate across our three counties. (Ongoing)

Community Partnerships

- **2023 LWVSCV Annual Meeting Keynote:** Panel discussion with PFLAG (Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays). Powerful presentation educating our membership about how to be influential allies with the LGBTQ+ community. (May, 2023)
- **Valley-Wide Pride Event.** LWVSCV accepted an invitation to participate in the first Valley-Wide Pride Event in Hudson. Now, an annual event is on our calendar. (June, 2023)
- **The Barbie Mobile.** Members (plus a 12-year-old unicyclist), marched in the Star Prairie Ox Cart Days Parade alongside our Barbie Mobile. Participants wore League T-shirts and pink boas, handing out candy and carrying League and VOTE signs. We were applauded and thanked along the parade route. (August, 2023)
- **Know Your Nonprofits Expo.** Our chapter was invited to participate in the Northwest Community Alliance Know Your Nonprofits Expo in Siren, Burnett County, for the first time. Our participation, increased LWV visibility and built connections with other non-profits. (October 2023)
- **Future Voter Storytime Toolkit.** In collaboration with a local librarian, we developed a Future Storytime Toolkit to teach pre-school kids (and their parents) about the importance of voting and the League. The Toolkit is available through MORE -- a consortium of libraries in Western Wisconsin sharing resources. (November, 2023)
- **Collaboration with Wisconsin Interfaith Voter Engagement Campaign (WIVEC).** Board approved furthering a relationship with the Wisconsin Interfaith Voter Engagement Campaign (WIVEC). (November, 2023 and ongoing)

- **Environmental Justice Presentation.** Collaborated with WI League chapters to sponsor a Zoom presentation entitled: “Achieving Environmental Justice”. (February, 2024)
- **LWVUS’ 104th Birthday.** Hosted celebrations by staffing voter education/information tables at three college campuses: Northwood Technical, University of Wisconsin, River Falls, and Chippewa Valley Technical, reaching 150 students. (February, 2024)
- **St. Patrick’s Day Parade.** For the second year in a row, we marched in the New Richmond St. Patrick’s Day parade dressed in green and handing out candy and carrying League and VOTE signs. (March, 2024)
- **Earth Day Student Panel on the Environment.** Our League chapter was a proud sponsor of a Main Street Voices event in Taylors Falls, MN, featuring science students from local high schools in Polk County. Moderated by WI Teacher of the Year, students discussed environmental topics including climate change, recycling, new technologies and economic impact. (April, 2024)
- **Adopt a School Book Mark Project.** Part of our youth outreach, bookmarks with voter registration information are designed for each high school in our three county-area. League liaisons then work with each school to distribute the bookmarks to seniors to help them to register to vote when they turn 18. A grant to help fund this project was submitted. (September, 2023 and ongoing)