



VOTER

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The *Voter* is issued the last Friday of the month to provide members advance notice of activities. **The August Voter deadline is July 25.**

July 2026

Celebrate with Hope and Action

This July 4th marks the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. This is truly a milestone in our nation's history and we should celebrate it. The recent 161st anniversary of Juneteenth, as well as the 126th anniversary of the 19th amendment, the upcoming 61st anniversary of the Voting Rights Act, and the recent gutting of that same Act, remind us that this nation is a work in progress. So, let there be hope in our celebration. The hope that the nation will continue to move toward the right to life, liberty, and pursuit of happiness for all. And then harness that hope into action.

The League is a great place for you to take action. Join us in our efforts to empower and educate voters to exercise their right to vote. Join us to protect the right to vote and ensure every vote is counted. Join us to advocate for positive change at the local, state, and national level. Join us to foster civil dialogue about important community issues. We, the people, have the power to continue to move this country forward to become a better democracy of the people, by the people, for the people - all of the people.

Need some inspiration? Jean Lloyd-Jones, a life member of the League, was interviewed on Iowa Public Radio's Talk of Iowa on June 12. If you missed it, you can listen to it here: [Jean Lloyd-Jones defied women's norms, devoting her life to public service | Iowa Public Radio](#)

Now through July 31, *Suffs*, the Broadway musical that tells the story of the American suffragist movement, is available streaming on PBS here: [Suffs | About | Great Performances | PBS](#). If you have not seen it, make some time to watch - you will be glad you did!

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Save the date/mark your calendars for our annual Fall Reception and Membership Drive scheduled for Thursday, September 3, 5 – 7 p.m. at the First Presbyterian Church in Iowa City. This event, which includes social time, light supper, and a speaker is complimentary to all members and their guests. It is our membership drive so bring a guest or two you think might be interested in joining us. Attendance in no way obligates them to join, and it might give them a better idea of what we do. I hope to see many of you at this event.

Check out the rest of this Voter to read about the work we are doing to empower voters and advocate for League priorities. Thank you all for your dedication to Empowering Voters and Defending Democracy!

Vicki Aden
LWVJC President



MEMBERSHIP

We currently have 171 members. I would like to welcome our League's newest member Estella Ruhrer-Johnson. Please reach out and welcome her into our League as you meet her at various League events throughout the coming year.

I would also like to thank all our members who are renewing their memberships. In these unprecedented times, now more than ever your membership is needed to help support the League's vision of a more inclusive democracy where all Americans see themselves represented in our government. Membership helps the League focus on expanding voter access; fighting voter suppression; ensuring the government serves the people and not wealthy special interests; redistricting; and providing safe and fair elections for all. Renewing your membership helps support actions ensuring everyone can participate in our democracy.

New Membership Chair

Beginning July 1, 2026 Karin Franklin will be our league's new membership chair. As outgoing chair,

it has been a pleasure welcoming new members and meeting everyone at various events throughout the year.

Membership Renewal Reminder

For those who joined the League after July 1, 2025 your membership renew date is the month in which you joined the League. Therefore, for any member who joined in April or May of 2025, your membership has lapsed so please renew as soon as possible. For most of our League's members your renewal date is June 30. As your renewal date approached, you should have received renewal reminders from the National League of Women Voters membership team with the heading "Renew Your League of Women Voters Membership." For those whose membership has lapsed, you should have also received a reminder from our League's membership email lwvjcmembership@gmail.com. Even if your membership has lapsed you can still renew your League membership by going to our League's website <https://my.lwv.org/iowa/johnson-county> and under "Get Involved" click the "Join or Renew" link. Please contact me with any questions about your membership or your renewal date at lwvjcmembership@gmail.com.

How to Renew and Pay Dues

- You can renew online by going to our League's website <https://my.lwv.org/iowa/johnson-county>. Click on the "LWV Member Portal" and the link should take you to your profile where you can click the "Renew" link. If renewing with a credit or debit card you will see 3 separate dues charges, one each for national, state, and local dues payments. The recommended renewal amount is \$75. However, if this creates a financial burden, the minimum annual dues amount starts at \$20 per person.
- Members can also renew online with a check by ACH (an electronic payment using the numbers on the bottom of a check). This method lowers fees for the League so more of your dues go directly to funding League work.
- If you send your dues renewal check to our League's PO Box, PO Box 5452, Coralville, IA 52241, please make the check out to either the LWVUS or LWV. Do not make the check out to LWV Johnson County.

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Casual Coffee

All members are always invited to attend our Casual Coffees on the second Wednesday of each month. It's a good way to enjoy a beverage and get to know other League members. Members meet at 10 a.m. at Poindexter's Coffee in the Graduate Hotel.

*Diane Duncan-Goldsmith
Membership Chair 2024-26*

*Karin Franklin
Membership Chair 2026-28*



VOTER REGISTRATION

Well, we almost made it through the Arts Fest without getting wet. At least this year the rain held off until the last two hours. Nevertheless, we had a successful event, registering 34 new voters and distributing several QR codes for online registrations. The weather for Pride Fest, June 20, was fantastic and the energy and interest in voting, especially among young voters, was amazing. Thanks to our energetic LWV volunteers, we registered 50 people, distributed QR codes, checked registrations and even had 3 requests for information on restoring voting rights for felons. Our summer schedule is pretty full beginning with Jazz Fest July 4 and 5, followed by North Liberty Blues and BBQ July 11, National Night Out at Wetherby Park August 4, and Latina Fest August 16. Sign-up genius emails have been sent for Jazz Fest with all volunteer slots filled. I will send out sign-up genius emails for the remaining events in July and August. If you would like to help register voters but are not on the sign-up genius emails, please email me at mkathyclark@gmail.com.

*Kathy Clark
Voter Registration Chair*



ADVOCACY

Hope: Why We Persist

I began writing this update while listening to the uplifting rhetoric celebrating the opening of the

Obama Presidential Library on Thursday, June 18th. It is so refreshing to be inspired by words appealing to the very best in who we are and sharing a vision of who we can be. Such a clear resurgence of hope and a powerful reminder of why we persist in protecting our democracy!

With the Iowa Legislature adjourned, the pace of the summer invites us to relax. However, the work of democracy does not stop. In many ways, the months between legislative sessions are among the most important opportunities for citizens to engage with elected officials, strengthen relationships, and help shape the policies that will emerge in the year ahead.

That is the spirit behind the LWVJC Advocacy Committee's Summer Outreach Program. Over the next three months, committee members will participate in advocacy training conducted by member Jennifer Terry, director of the Hubbell Environmental Law Initiative, in preparation to reach beyond the Capitol and into our communities. We are meeting with legislators in their districts, building relationships with partner advocacy organizations, and expanding opportunities for members to become more informed and effective advocates. Through our Advocacy Outreach, we hope to equip our members with the skills and confidence to engage constructively with elected officials. By listening, learning, and engaging respectfully with those who represent us, we strengthen the civic fabric that holds our communities together.

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At the opening of his Library, President Obama reminded the nation that, *“Hope is not about ignoring the hard stuff. It is that thing inside us that insists something better awaits if we are willing to work for it.”*

Those words resonate deeply with our work today. Advocacy is not about expecting immediate victories. It is about the patient work of building understanding, cultivating trust, and creating opportunities for progress. It is about believing that our voices matter, even when the challenges before us seem overwhelming.

The message etched into the walls of the new Presidential Center offers another powerful reminder:

“You are America. Unconstrained by habit and convention. Unencumbered by what is, ready to seize what ought to be... The single most powerful word in our democracy is the word ‘We.’”

That simple word—we—lies at the heart of the League’s mission.

The challenges facing Iowa and our nation are real. Yet history teaches us that progress has always depended upon ordinary people willing to participate, organize, and advocate for a more representative democracy. Every conversation with a legislator, every letter written, every public meeting attended, and every new advocate welcomed into our work is a step forward.

Hope is not passive. Hope is action.

As we look toward the coming legislative session and the elections ahead, let us remember why we persist. We persist because democracy is not self-executing. We persist because informed citizens make stronger communities. We persist because future generations deserve a government that is transparent, responsive, and representative. And we persist because, together, we still believe in the power of “We.”

*Kathy Wandro
Advocacy Chair*



MAKING CONNECTIONS

Monday evening, July 20 all League members are encouraged to come to the Green House, 505 E. Washington Street, to relax and socialize from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. The Green House is an elegant and relaxing cocktail lounge in downtown Iowa City featuring botanical cocktails, both spirit-full and spirit-free that will be available for purchase. Snacks will be provided by the committee.

League members will have a dedicated space to socialize and get to know each other. This is a time to debrief before we go forward to a busy and important fall election season. We hope you will consider taking a couple of hours that evening to enjoy conversation with other League members in a very unique setting.

Directors is being pursued, but this expense is not budgeted in FY26 or FY27.

LWVIA COUNCIL JUNE 6, 2026

Forty-four LWVIA members, representing ten of the eleven Iowa local Leagues met at the beautiful Reiman Gardens in Ames, Iowa on Saturday, June 6, 2026. The morning session was informational.

Dr. Kelly B. Shaw, Professor of Political Science and the Cyclone Civics Co-Chair, was the keynote speaker. His topic was *The Third Way: Teaching Civics in Polarized Times*. ISU developed a survey course that will fulfill the HF2800 requirements for students entering Fall semester 2028.

Dr. Linda Serra Hagedorn and Carolyn Klaus then demonstrated the Citizens Handbook written by and for the League. A copy of the Citizens Handbook was given to each local League. High school seniors must now pass a citizenship test to graduate. Amy Campbell gave a video report on the past legislative session and bills related to League priorities.

After lunch, Kylie Spies of Common Good Iowa presented facts on the SJR11 Constitutional Amendment (amending the state constitution to require a two-thirds vote of both chambers of the state legislature to pass a bill that would increase the individual or corporate income tax rate or create a new income tax). This will be on the general election ballot November 3, 2026. SJR11 will be a League statewide voter education focus. Barb Wheelock then spoke on increasing uniformity of Action Alerts.

The annual Business Meeting featured the current year financial report and presentation of the proposed budget for 2026-2027. Treasurer Shannon Patrick reported the revenue was above budget and expenses were under budget! We are awaiting confirmation that the IRS is accurately posting our LWVIA tax status (501c3). Once that is confirmed, he recommends LWVIA also set up an advocacy organization (501c4). A quote on insurance for the Board of

The Election of Officers included 2 Co-Presidents, a Vice President, a Treasurer, and 4 new Directors.

Co-Presidents (2026-2027): **Linda Serra Hagedorn** (LWV Ames and Story County) and **Bre Oxley** (Linn County)

Vice President (2026-2028): **Ashley Vanorny** (Linn County)

Treasurer (2026-2028): **Susan Cornforth** (Black Hawk-Bremer)

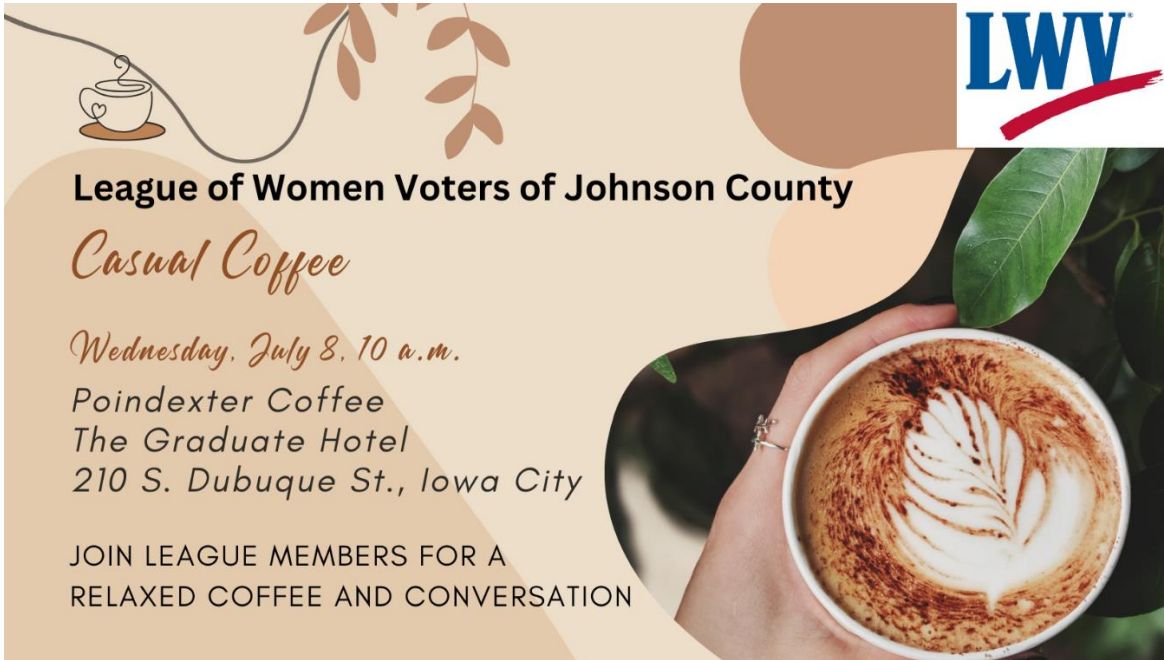

Directors (2026-2028): **Carolyn Klaus** (Ames and Story County), **Courtney Kuenn** (Sioux City), **Susan Bangert** (North Iowa), **Marti Hurst** (Linn County)

They join current board members: Past President Terese Grant (Jasper Grinnell), Secretary Paula Vaughan (Johnson County) and Directors Teresa Bomhoff (Metro Des Moines), Peg Lazio (Ottumwa), Sue Wilson (Dubuque), Martha Wolf (SE Iowa), and Maureen White (Black Hawk-Bremer).

Polly Horton and Vicki Aden

The logo for "MAKING DEMOCRACY WORK". The word "MAKING" is in a large, bold, blue, sans-serif font. Below it, the words "DEMOCRACY WORK" are in a smaller, bold, red, sans-serif font. A registered trademark symbol (®) is located at the end of "WORK".

*****UPCOMING EVENTS*****



League of Women Voters of Johnson County

Casual Coffee

Wednesday, July 8, 10 a.m.

Poindexter Coffee
The Graduate Hotel
210 S. Dubuque St., Iowa City

JOIN LEAGUE MEMBERS FOR A
RELAXED COFFEE AND CONVERSATION



*Making
Connections*

Summer Social

JULY 20, 5:30-7:30PM
THE GREEN HOUSE
505 E WASHINGTON ST, IOWA CITY
BEVERAGES AND SNACKS

LWV LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS'
OF JOHNSON COUNTY, IOWA

★ VOTING

Promote equal access to voting and ensure all votes are counted. Adopt automatic voter registration. Pass a constitutional amendment allowing Iowans with felony convictions to vote after time served. Promote open primary elections. Join the National Popular Vote Interstate Compact.

🏛️ TRANSPARENCY & CITIZENSHIP

Demand government accountability and transparency by requiring all amendments and bills discussed in committee to be available to the public prior to a vote. Demand timely processing of Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests. Encourage direct citizen participation by requiring virtual committees and subcommittees.

🎓 EDUCATION

Provide oversight and track public funds being used for non-public schools. Require any non-public school receiving public funds to meet the same standards as public schools. Fully fund public schools. Continue to expand access to affordable childcare. Restore statewide special education and disability services.

♀️ REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS

Guarantee access to the full range of women's reproductive health services. Repeal the six-week abortion ban. Make contraception available without prescription and promote programs that help prevent unplanned pregnancies. Ensure Medicaid services are comprehensive and accessible. Set policies that attract maternal health professionals and address the state's OB/GYN deserts.

👤 HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Increase state funding for victim services; develop strategies to prevent human trafficking, domestic violence, and sexual assault; and enact "Safe Harbor" legislation to protect victims from criminal prosecution.

💧 WATER

Prioritizing, protecting and improving Iowa water quality and ensuring its sustainable management. Enact policies that safeguard clean water and address challenges of health risks, pollution, overuse and climate change.

🔫 GUN SAFETY

Ban assault rifles and military-grade weapons for civilian use. Enact background checks on all gun sales, close gun show loopholes, require gun safety locks, repeal Iowa's "stand your ground" law, and oppose laws that allow carrying guns on school grounds.



League of Women Voters of Johnson County

OUR MISSION: *Empowering Voters. Defending Democracy.*

OUR VISION: We envision a democracy where every person has the desire, the right, the knowledge and the confidence to participate.

OUR VALUE: We believe in the power of women and men to create a more perfect democracy.

PHOTO GALLERY

Mississippi River Day, June 5

The group included members of LWV Muscatine, LWV Johnson County, and UMRR-ILO. Started the day with a tour of the Stanley Center for Peace and Security in Muscatine and ended at Lock & Dam No. 16.

Below: Linda Meloy, member of LWVJC highlights her new book.





Lynne Ikach and Lynda Ostedgaard register voters at Arts Fest, downtown Iowa City



Iowa Delegation at LWV National Convention 2026. L to R: Tam Prenasil (Dubuque), Lettie Prell (Des Moines), Carolyn Klaus (Ames/Story Co), Linda Hagedorn (Ames/Story Co), Jeanne Bancroft (Johnson Co), Karin Franklin (Johnson Co). Vicki Aden and Kathy Wandro are attending virtually.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Date	Time	Location	Program
July 4 - 5	Various Times	Downtown Iowa City	Voter Registration at the Jazz Festival
Wednesday, July 8	10 a.m.	Poindexter Coffee, 210 S Dubuque St, Iowa City	Monthly Casual Coffee
Saturday, July 11	Various Times	Centennial Park, 1565 Saint Andrews Drive, North Liberty	Voter Registration at the North Liberty Blues & BBQ
Monday, July 13	7 p.m.	Zoom	LWVJC Monthly Board Meeting
Saturday, July 18	Various Times	Solon	Voter Registration at Solon Beef Days
Monday, July 20	5:30 - 7:30 p.m.	The Green House, 505 E Washington St, Iowa City	Making Connections Summer Social