



IN LEAGUE

*The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages informed, **diverse**, and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.*

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF BELOIT

Late May 2020

THE LWV IS A VOLUNTEER ORGANIZATION THAT DOES A PROFESSIONAL JOB

Up-coming Events:

May 16, 10:00 a.m. Book Study Meeting (see article)

Virtual Meeting via Zoom, anyone may join

May 18 (see information in the newsletter)

Stand against Racism 12:00 p.m. Hosted by the YWCA

Courageous Conversations 5:30 p.m. Hosted by the YWCA

May 21, 3:00 p.m. Education Study Presenter: Michelle Shope

School District of Beloit -- "BoardDocs—How to locate meeting items and more"

Virtual Meeting via Zoom, anyone may join (see article)

May 29, 1:30 p.m. 19th Amendment Celebration Committee Meeting

If interested but not on the committee, please check with Gayle if it will be held via Zoom or at the Beloit Historical Society.

June 8, 4:30 p.m. Beloit LWV Leadership Team / Board Meeting

Virtual Meeting via Zoom, Members always invited.

BELOIT LWV BOARD OF DIRECTORS

*Susan Adams, Betsy Brewer, Bette Carr, Stephanie Dobson, Dave Dobson,
Anne Bua-Demus, Sam Erickson, Gayle Hotchkiss, Joyce Metter,
Barb Porter, Dorothy Scavera*

NEW OFFICERS VOTED IN AT ANNUAL MEETING

The Annual Meeting was held on April 25th, and new officers include:

President: Susan Adams

Secretary: Anne Bua-Demus

Treasurer: Gayle Sullivan Hotchkiss

Watch for more exciting information in our June-July Newsletter!!



Cooler-Smarter Book Study Continues

This Saturday, May 16, at 10:00 a.m. the book study group will meet and review Chapters 4 and 5. If you do not have the book, the chapters are available by sending an email to Betsy Brewer:

eebrewer@hotmail.com. We hope that you will join us.

Book Study: The Union of Concerned Scientists (2012). *Cooler Smarter: Practical Steps for Low-Carbon Living*. Washington, DC: Island Press.

On April 18, seven League members met by Zoom for an hour-long conversation on climate changes. Susan Adams and Betsy Brewer facilitated the discussion, with Bette Carr convening the meeting. Two chapters from the book served as the basis for discussion. Chapter 2, "Sweat the Right Stuff," points readers to the five largest sources of Americans' carbon emissions, while Chapter 12, "Welcome to Our Low Carbon Future," argues that there is no choice forward but to reduce carbon emissions. Conversation focused on implications of climate change for Beloit league practices, and questions the League might explore at local and state levels. The slides accompanying this newsletter show main points from the chapters.

While the group plans to continue discussion of the book and invites other League members to join it, it is exploring the possibility of inviting local experts to speak to the League, preferably at the Beloit Public Library so that members of the general public can also attend. Three possible speakers were identified: Laura Pigatti Williamson (City of Beloit Public Works), Pablo Toral (International Relations and Environmental Studies, Beloit College), and Steve Vavrus (Senior scientist, Nelson Institute Center for Climatic Research, UW Madison). All three are interested in this possibility.

Several members of the discussion group also picked up trash on Earth Day.

The next book discussion will take place via Zoom at 10:00 a.m., SEE INVITE BELOW, May 16. As preparation, League members are invited to

- read chapters 4 and 5 (personal transportation, home heating & cooling)
- complete the University of Berkeley's carbon footprint household calculator (<http://coolclimate.berkeley.edu>)

During the discussion, we will also hear brief reports on the following:

- Susan Adams: City of Beloit Public Works sustainability practices
- Deb Fallon: Local bike path project and Welty school outreach activities
- Dorothy Scavera: WI School Standards for teaching about sustainability/climate change

Cooler Smarter Practical Suggestions for Low- Carbon Living

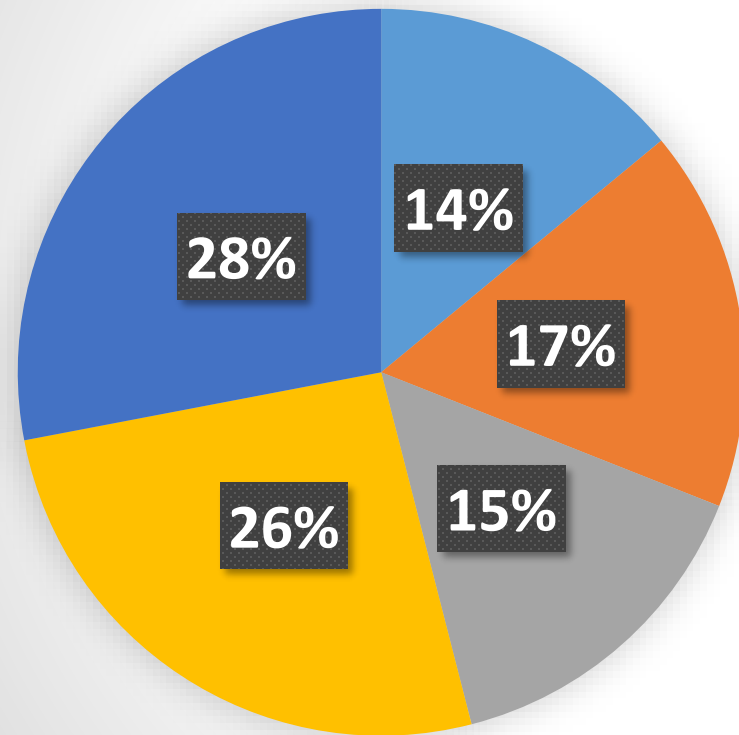
The Union of Concerned Scientists

2012

Sweat the Right Stuff:

Focus on Sources of Emissions

Average American Carbon Emissions



- Food
- Home Heating and Cooling
- Other Home Energy Usage
- Purchases
- Transportation

Recommendations

Transportation: cars with better MPG, alternatives to driving, limit flights/year, car pool, efficient errands

Heating, cooling, other household energy usage: programmable thermostat, energy efficient appliances, unplug devices when not in use, more insulation. Zero-net-energy homes.

Food: Limit meat consumption, particularly beef consumption. Avoid bottled water. Decrease your food waste. Compost.

Purchases: Buy used. Recycle. Think twice about your Amazon purchases.

Welcome to our Low Carbon Future

- Walkable, bikeable, mixed-use communities with green spaces
 - More efficient mass transit within communities. Energy efficient high-speed rail between communities.
 - Renewable energy
1. Save energy by using it less and using it more efficiently
 2. Build new renewable energy capacity
 3. Invest in research and development

Work from the top down and from the bottom up

Book Study Zoom Invite:

Bette Carr is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: Book Study-Environmental Issues

Time: May 16, 2020 10:00 AM Central Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/97111266591?pwd=QWxQQkJKzJ4Tk5yUy8rbEJTY3Bidz09>

Meeting ID: 971 1126 6591

Password: 440616

One tap mobile

+13126266799,,97111266591#,,1#,440616# US (Chicago)

MAIL-IN VOTING

One of the topics mentioned at Lively Issues was Mail-In Voting. On May 11, **Fresh Air** on NPR (National Public Radio) aired a podcast on this topic. It contains an interview by Terry Gross of Emily Bazelon author of the New York Times Magazine article "Will Americans Lose Their right To Vote in The Pandemic?" The interview covers many topics and the pros and cons of a mail-in vote. An example of several issues raised are:

- **Cost** -it is estimated it would take \$4billion to run a mail in election while Congress has only allocated \$400 million.
- **Expenses**- high speed scanners and secure drop off boxes
- Party Divisions about this type of election
- **Voter Fraud**
- **Problems with the Postal System**- Post Office has budget problems among other things.
- **Electoral College and the Legislature**

To hear more in-depth information, plus a discussion of Wisconsin's primary election in April, be sure to listen to **Fresh Air's** podcast for May 11,2020.

<https://www.npr.org/podcasts/381444908/fresh-air>

STAND AGAINST RACISM

Many of you have attended the YWCA Rock County's annual Stand Against Racism. Please know we will be hosting a virtual Stand this Monday, May 18, at noon online.

Please visit the YWCA Rock County's Facebook page to join!

<https://www.ywcarockcounty.org/stand-against-racism-2020/>

COURAGEOUS CONVERSATIONS

This month, in conjunction with Community Action and the Diversity Action Team, we are hosting Courageous Conversations virtually. Please spread the word with any individuals that you believe will be interested in attending. The Zoom information is provided below. Thank you in advance!

Courageous Conversations
May Topic: The Impact of COVID-19 on Communities of Color
Monday, May 18, 2020
5:30 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86734625514?pwd=ekJFS2JrYk8yUDlMMGdKWjRyUHpzQT09>

Meeting ID: 867 3462 5514

Password: 331151

One tap mobile

+13126266799,,86734625514#,,1#,331151# US (Chicago)

19th Amendment Celebration Committee Meeting

Friday, May 29, 1:30pm 19th Amendment Celebration Committee Meeting

If interested but not on the committee, please check with Gayle if it will be held via Zoom or at the Beloit Historical Society.



Education Study Committee Continues

The Education Study Committee has been meeting monthly reviewing the local league’s position on education. We are learning a lot and hoping to hold a consensus meeting in the fall. Members have interviewed area school districts trying to get a broader view of the different education systems. Susan Adams, League Board wrote a letter to the Editor about the communication difficulties. See the letter attached.

Our next meeting is open to all members who have an interest in the School District of Beloit Board documents. Michelle Shope will hold a training for league members who would like to know how to access BoardDocs and where different documents can be found. Please join us for that meeting on May, 21, at 3:00 p.m. via Zoom.

ZOOM INVITE:

Bette Carr is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: Education Presentor-Michelle Shope

Time: May 21, 2020 03:00 PM Central Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87430179271?pwd=dW94RHc4TVNUMXNMNEs2MklLNDZlZDZz09>

Meeting ID: 874 3017 9271

Password: 622556

One tap mobile

+16465588656,,87430179271#,,1#,622556# US (New York)

EARTH DAY PHOTOS OF BOOK STUDY MEMBERS



Letter to editor - guest editorial

The Beloit League of Women Voters would like to thank the outgoing members of the Beloit School Board: Pam Charles, Jeff Klett, and Wendy Sanchez for offering their skills and expertise to our School Board. We all know there continue to be many difficult challenges facing the new board, and we want to welcome Maria Delgado, Amiee Leavy and Spencer Anderson and to welcome back Stephanie Jacobs. And to returning, more experienced members John Wong, Megan Miller and Kyle Larson, we expect that you will act upon the following challenges.

The League has members observing and giving reports from nearly every meeting. A quick review shows a number of major challenges remain. Among them are: 1. a lack of communication with the community. 2. Technology, i.e. board website, Spectrum and BoardDocs. #3. A tendency to spend excessive money to handle personnel hires that have resulted in early departures, contract buyouts and then hiring their replacements.

The lack of communication manifests itself first with the School Board website. It used to be easy to find information; it had a list of meetings by date with agendas and minutes. Now you must use BoardDocs, the official place to post meetings, which is difficult to find and use. They only need to post notices 24 hours in advance, so you need to check there daily. The site directs you to call for training on using the site if necessary. That shouldn't be necessary; it should be easy to use for everyone.

Aside from being difficult to find, BoardDocs is problematic. The agendas appear there 24 hours in advance, but many meeting minutes are missing. The website states "The remarkably easy-to-use service (BoardDocs) has allowed the organization to maximize the effectiveness of its meetings with increased transparency, providing a basis for better and more open communication with the public, while dramatically improving productivity and saving thousands of dollars annually." It doesn't work; too many minutes are still missing and it requires too much staff time to post minutes. Posting minutes was to be simple. How is this saving taxpayer dollars or giving us transparency? Why are we paying for this poor service? Until this is fixed, funds should be withheld.

Meetings themselves are only available on You Tube. The public access channel hasn't worked since they moved the board meetings to the new Kolak building. As a result, the community cannot view the Board meetings via cable nor can the District use it for educational programming. On April 14, The President of the Board said they have tried, but have reached a "dead end" with Spectrum on this issue. He suggested community members call Spectrum to complain. Although it may be tempting to suggest we withhold funds, that isn't possible because it would cost them their E-rates status. The Board will have to continue to follow-up on this issue.

Aside from videotaping meetings and posting agendas, little communication with the public occurs. We haven't seen anything in the newspaper for quite a while. If you write to the full board, you may or may not receive an answer, or maybe a very cursory one from the President, with a few exceptions. Last year sometime, the board had decided that they would speak with one voice and that the President would be that voice. This needs to change now. We believe Board members should feel comfortable answering community questions. Voters elect each one of these board members. They are answerable to voters, not the Board President. When we write to our government representatives, we expect answers. They don't have to clear it with anyone. That's how a democracy works.

It is also not easy to discover how educational classes are being conducted now. If you read the Beloit Daily newspaper article titled, [Beloit School District launches Online Learning on April 6](#) published on April 1, which is linked on the district website, it leads one to believe that actual learning started April 6, yet it didn't start until April 20, which is several weeks behind neighboring districts. According to the news article, they were to be contacting families individually to see if they had internet access or computers to do student work. There has been no update with the community about these results. Four or five weeks is simply too long for a hiatus in teaching. It is so much later than other districts. We are extremely disappointed in this lack of planning and organization and the dearth of information about the education process in Beloit during the "Safer at Home" order.

Finally, many of us in the community are concerned with the amount of money being spent to hire administrators and lawyers, and to buy out contracts. This happened again recently, when Bill Beckley resigned, because the Board President stated for the Beloit Daily News, his job was to "get out into the schools, talk to staff and rebuild trust and communication which cannot be done with the temporary school closures." This was an unfortunate choice of words. We have to get creative and figure out how to rebuild trust and communication in spite of the virus. The district still needs to rebuild trust and communication with the community as well as the staff. Another missed opportunity.

Indeed, there are numerous challenges the board faces. There is no need to do it alone, though. The Beloit community wants to help. To do this we need to be able to easily find and access accurate good, timely information. We have to move beyond our issues with the past administrations and engage in a process with enough time to do the best job possible. A whole community is here for you. It is our hope that you access their talents and use them wisely.

Susan E. Adams,

Beloit LWV Secretary

Welcome to our newest member:

Yuri Rashkin



Renewing or Joining the League of Women Voters membership is easy!

Simply print out this page and cut off this form.

Write your check to the League of Women Voters of Beloit. Dues are \$65. Student \$10.

Mail it to the Beloit LWV Membership Chair: Deb Fallon

1232 Elm St., Beloit, WI 53511

name _____ *phone* _____ *date* _____

street _____ *city/state* _____ *zip* _____

e-mail _____ *In League is sent by email, please check your email for notices.*

Amount enclosed for dues: _____ Donation: _____

Application for LWV Dues Scholarship: I hereby request consideration for a LWV Dues Scholarship for one year's membership. I understand that it is my responsibility to pay \$25 of the annual dues and that a Board member will be in contact with me regarding final completion.

Signature

(Dues are renewed by the end of October each year)