

VOTER

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July 2023

Empowering Voters. Defending Democracy.

Happy Summer and Welcome to new and returning members of the Board as we begin our new fiscal year in July. A reminder that annual dues for all members are due at the end of June. You may go to our website, <https://lwvcj.org/> to renew online and pay either by check or credit card.

Our League was well represented at the LWVIA State Convention in Dubuque a few weeks ago. Eighteen members attended, 14 of whom were delegates and two who serve on the State Board. Many of us enjoyed lunch along the Mississippi and discussion in the Galena library on Friday with the Upper Mississippi River Regional InterLeague Organization (UMRRILO.) The Mayor of Dubuque welcomed us to the convention and thanked the League for our work. We learned more about how the state criminal justice system works (or doesn't work in the case of those unable to afford even a percentage of bail), about the Electoral College, and Ranked Choice Voting. The LWVJC contributed six items to the silent auction and raised \$435 for the State League. For a comprehensive recap of the state convention, read new board director Diane Duncan-Goldsmith's account in this newsletter.

Committee work continues throughout the summer with the Education, Voter Services, and Diversity Equity Inclusion (DEI) committees preparing programming for Autumn and the Advocacy committee strategizing for the next legislative session. Meanwhile, members of the Voter Registration committee, led by new board director Silvia Quezada, are actively registering voters at several local events.

Join us July 12, 10 a.m. at Poindexter Coffee in the Graduate Hotel in downtown Iowa City for Casual Coffee and watch your email inbox for the next Making Connections gathering.

Mark your calendars for this year's annual Fall Reception and Membership Drive, August 31 at Unitarian Universalist Society 5:30-7:30 p.m. This event, which includes social time, food and speaker is complimentary for all members and guests. Please invite people you think may like to join the League; they are under no obligation to do so. Christina Bohannon, UI Law professor, will be our featured speaker. Her talk is entitled *The Shifting Legal Landscape and Potential Effects on Voter Turnout*.

Thank you everyone for your continued support of LWVJC!

Paula Vaughan and Miriam Timmer-Hackert
LWVJC Co-Presidents



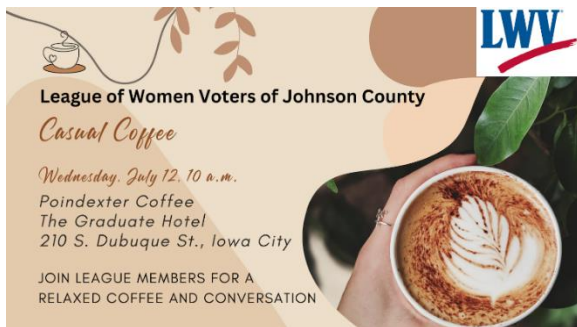
Membership

Active membership for League of Women Voters Johnson Co is currently at 155 members. We welcome the following new members this month: Mary Mascher, Jane Shuttleworth, and Casey Cook. Each new member receives the New Member Orientation Guide and the current edition of The Voter.

The LWVJC has a common annual renewal date of June 30. Individual dues are \$70, Household \$105 and student \$20. You can join or renew online using the link below to the League website, or you can complete the form and send it with your check in mail. Your promptness in renewing is very helpful. Everyone who has not yet renewed should receive an email reminder by the June 30 date. The email will come from lwvjcmembership@gmail.com, so you might check your spam folder if you do not see it by July 1. If you think you already renewed but aren't sure, send me an email and I will check for you.

Most of our new members come as a result of a current member reaching out to a friend to consider joining. The Fall Reception and membership drive will be held on Thursday, August 31. Please invite one or more guests so they can learn about the work of the League. If you know someone now who would like to join the LWVJC, here is the link for online membership form <https://lwvj.org/join-league/>.

Jeanne Bancroft, Membership Chair
lwvjcmembership@gmail.com



Voter Registration

Happy July! Let me begin by welcoming the new Voter Registration Coordinator, Silvia Quezada. Thank you to everyone for your support and help with voter registration over my tenure. I know you will be a great help to Silvia as well!

At the end of May and through June, we had five voter registration events, including two events at the Coralville Community Food Pantry, registering students at the Iowa City Liberty, City, and West High School graduation rehearsals, and booths at the Iowa City Arts Festival and the Iowa City Juneteenth Celebration. Through these events, our 23 volunteers took in 35 voter registrations! Thank you volunteers for your efforts!

Silvia is off and running as the new Voter Registration Coordinator with events coming up in July and August. On Saturdays from 3 – 7 pm on July 8, 15, 22, 29 and August 5, 12, and 19, the South District Diversity Market is back at Pepperwood Plaza. We will again have a booth for voter registration and voter information at this fun, family-friendly market showcasing local arts, food and music. If you would like to volunteer for a 2-hour shift at our booth on one (or two?) of these Saturdays, you can sign up here:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/8050B44A9A82BA2FA7-south>.

Other upcoming events include the Corridor Community Action Network Community Engagement Festival on the Iowa City Ped Mall on August 27, and National Voter Registration Day on Tuesday September 19.

Thank you all for your support of voting!

Vicki Aden
Silvia Quezada
 Voter Registration Coordinator



Advocacy Update

With the legislature out of session (at last!), the tempo of the Advocacy Committee has slowed, and we've shifted our focus from communicating with legislators to education and planning.

The League itself has provided numerous opportunities for education recently, including Chris Jones' presentation at the Johnson County meeting and speakers about the electoral college and ranked-choice voting at the LWVIA state convention. Additionally, committee members have attended meetings and webinars on abortion, LGBTQ+ rights, gun safety, the Mississippi and Iowa's water, and more.

That list, as you might expect, lines up with the topics that we are following. For many of them, we are working ahead to assemble talking points, identify potential partner organizations, and otherwise work ahead.

One other opportunity for advocacy that we are looking at is the federal farm bill. The farm bill is up for renewal this year--it has a five-year cycle--and will have significant impact on issues ranging from water quality to school lunches. While we typically focus on state-level issues, the farm bill is an unusual opportunity with outsized implications for Iowa's environment and economy. If you are signed up for the Advocacy alerts, watch your inbox for an alert on it soon.

Finally, we are planning to present a training, tentatively scheduled in August (date to be determined) at the Iowa City Public Library, on the guide the committee assembled regarding how to track legislation as it moves through the Iowa legislature. This event will be free and open to the public, so please spread the word if you know others who would be interested in this topic. More information will be sent once the date is set.

Shannon Patrick
Advocacy Chair



Diversity Equity Inclusion

The Diversity, Equity and Inclusion committee offered their three session workshop to League members this last month. We had about eight members join us to discuss white privilege, its role in our lives and in our community. Informative and inspiring readings and videos were shared, with time spent connecting what we were learning to our own lives. We had great conversations with our group of LWVJC women who were willing to look carefully at complicated issues and consider how the readings, resources, and discussions changed their views. We left the last session motivated to take action that could potentially contribute to change.

The committee continues to look for opportunities to offer the workshop to small groups in our community. We are currently exploring collaborating with the Senior Center and TRAIL, a local organization that supports aging in place. If you know of a group that would be interested in participating or sponsoring a workshop, contact Bea Hicks at beacruz@aol.com or Anne Spencer at spencerfarms@gmail.com.

Anne Spencer
DEI Committee

Communications Committee

Are you a Facebook wiz or a web page guru? Are you a master of news releases? Love taking photos at events? Wish you could be editing this newsletter? If so, the LWVJC Communications team needs you! If you are interested in lending your talents to telling the

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LWVJC story, please contact Vicki Aden at the email address on the first page of this newsletter.

Vicki Aden
Communications Chair



2023 State Convention

Approximately seventy League delegates from across the state, including fourteen from Johnson County, gathered for the League of Women Voters of Iowa state convention held Saturday, June 10, 2023, at the Holiday Inn Downtown, Dubuque.

On Friday, prior to the official start of the convention, several members attended an event coordinated by Nancy Porter to celebrate River Days of Action 2023 which included lunch and a presentation at the Galena, IL library. Friday evening, Tamara Prenosil gave a presentation "Abolishing the Electoral College." Ms. Prenosil shared a great deal of information which supports the League of Women Voters of the United States position that the Electoral College should be abolished and replaced as the direct-popular-vote method for electing the President and Vice President is essential to representative government. Information covered the history of the Electoral College and explanation of the impact the current process has on our elections. Time will tell what the future holds for re-examining and possibly changing the system by which our President and Vice President are elected.

On Saturday morning, after the presentation of flags by a local Girl Scout group, Dubuque League President Tam Prenosil welcomed delegates. Dubuque Mayor Brad Cavanaugh gave a warm welcome and highlighted many of the initiatives and accomplishments happening in Dubuque which benefit the entire community. Next Mary Rae Bragg highlighted the silent auction which was held throughout the day. LWVIA President Terese Grant called the convention to order. Chapter Presidents

highlighted the many activities, programs, and events each chapter had sponsored over the past year. Individual chapter websites serve as a resource for additional information about these very busy chapters. With a focus on water quality, information from the Upper Mississippi River Region Inter-League Organization (UMRR-ILO) and the Upper Mississippi River Region was presented. Obviously, there is a concern regarding the impact of Iowa's polluted waters on the Mississippi River. Addressing water quality and pollution includes an advocacy focus which includes the 2023 Farm Bill. More information can be found at www.lwvummr.org. LWVIA lobbyist Amy Campbell gave an overview of the 2023 legislative session. Some of the legislation mentioned is as follows: \$30 million in cuts to the Area Education Agencies; book banning; parents' rights in public schools; anti-equity legislation; public assistance barriers with the cost of the new SNAP system reaching \$32 million; child labor law changes; erosion of local control; in-person caucuses; and guns on school property (which only failed due to insurance company protests). There were 1900 bills with 71 impacting League priorities. The League's Bill Tracker at <https://www.ialobby.com/billtracker/lwvia>, can be used to check active and inactive bills. Inactive bills can be made viable in the 2024 legislative session. Finally, Amy noted the Governor's budget spent only 88% of state revenues.

The League's study on *Bringing Economic Justice to the Justice System 2022-2024* was presented by Jean Dell and Bonnie Pitz. The study examined the wide disparity in the costs borne by poor defendants and compared the costs for citizens with similar charges to those unable to pay the cost of defense and bail. Results showed the poorest citizens are plunged deeper into poverty as a result of the current Justice system. A complete study and pending position can be found at www.lwvia.org, click on Issues, then State Studies.

Kelcey Patrick-Ferree discussed the Johnson County Procurement Study. The study focused on the belief all governments and public entities within Johnson County should adopt and follow

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sound fiscal policies including best practices for procurement functions which include transparency, accountability, specific dollar limits and consistent bidding practices. A motion was made and passed to undertake a comprehensive review within the state. The study on Geographic Information Systems, chaired by Dhuha Tawil of the Johnson County League, was presented and approved for further action at the state level.

Deborah Turner, MD, JD, 20th President of the League of Women Voters of the United States, gave an inspiring keynote address. Dr. Turner shared wonderful stories of growing up in Mason City, Iowa. Raised with the belief she could do anything, she was the first African-American woman to integrate a sorority at Iowa State University. She shared some exciting information regarding upcoming national League changes. Changes which will invest more in people power. There will be no more PMP (per member payment) which will simplify dues. Also, the National League will take no more than 1/3 of the dues; the remainder will be split between local and state leagues, providing more financial resources, which should certainly help local chapters.

Afternoon presentations included an explanation of *Better Ballot Iowa – Rank Choice Voting* by Kehry Lane. This is a process in which voters rank candidates by preference on their ballots. If a candidate wins a majority of first-preference votes, he or she is declared the winner. If no candidate wins a majority of first-preference votes, the candidate with the fewest first-preference votes is eliminated. First-preference votes cast for the failed candidate are eliminated and counting the next-preference choice indicated on those ballots. A new tally is conducted to determine whether any candidate has won a majority of the adjusted votes. The process is repeated until a candidate wins an outright majority.

Additional business conducted at the meeting included the review and approval of the minutes of the 2021 state convention and 2022 state council meetings, as well as the financial report and approval of the budget. The Nominating Committee made their report and the new slate

of LWVIA officers and directors was approved by the delegates.

The end of the convention included the State of the League speech given by Terese Grant. In her reflections on the past year, Ms. Grant discussed the challenges the League faced in order to defend democracy in Iowa, challenges which are threats to freedoms both as individuals and institutions. The League will continue to use its power to educate voters and advocate and defend our democracy.

The Carrie Chapman Catt Award was presented to long-time member Carolyn Goodwin, member of the Sioux City League, for her many years of service and contributions to the League. Ms. Goodwin will have a stone paver with her name and year of award placed in the Plaza of Heroines in front of Catt Hall on the ISU campus.

Finally, the results of the auction were announced. The auction was a great success with donations from Johnson County members raising \$435 for the State League as follows: the suitcase with a Suffragist costume raised \$90; the banned book bag raised \$100; the laundry basket with a League shirt, Hawkeye items, and eco friendly laundry supplies raised \$50; the wine, chocolates and Iowa City books raised \$80; a mounted lighthouse photo raised \$50; and the basket with houseplants, crocheted blanket, and League shirt raised \$65.

Diane M. Duncan-Goldsmith

**THE LWV UPPER MISSISSIPPI RIVER
REGION INTER LEAGUE ORGANIZATION**

Upper Mississippi River Region InterLeague Organization (UMRRILO)

The setting for the LWVIA Annual Convention in Dubuque, Iowa, was perfect because of the weather and the busy members of the Dubuque League who obviously worked hard to make our Convention meaningful and packed full of information. Our gift baskets from

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Johnson County were a plus in adding money to the state's account. Kudos to Tamara Prenosil, the current President of the Dubuque local. It took a lot of work to put together our booklet and have arrangements that were so timely and important.

A day before the Convention began, nineteen people met at the Stone Cliff Winery for lunch and to celebrate the Mississippi River Days of Action. We visited, walked along the River Walk, had a great lunch, and wrote letters to our Congresspeople concerning the Farm Bill which is up for renewal this session. You, too, can send a letter of encouragement by going to <https://1mississippi.org/> and under the 'taking action' area let our Congress know we care about the River and actions needed to keep it flowing, and safe for both our economy and those who use the River for recreation. After lunch, we went to the Galena Public Library and listened to Dale Glick, who presented about the history of the River and Galena. Have you heard about Galena Lead? Did you know a lot of that lead was dug by Native American women and children? Did you know Galena handled a lot of water when the Mississippi River flooded? Areas that were covered by water are now a green park space. Houses that regularly had water in the bottom half, are now protected from the floods.

The Convention began in earnest the next day. Dr. Deb Turner spoke to us and took questions. As an organization, we are very fortunate to have Dr. Turner at the helm. As a born Iowan, a child from Mason City, she has made the most of her experiences and opportunities. She chose a career and became an OBGYN physician.

Each local president gave a brief presentation. We have a lot going on in Iowa and we can be very proud of the efforts and those working to defend democracy and voting rights.

The Chair of our Upper Mississippi River Region-InterLeague Organization spoke. Chair

Mary Ellen Miller was a founding member of UMRR-ILO in 2015, and many of the same people still occupy Board positions. I was allowed to speak about the Mississippi River Network following "Mem" at the LWVIA Annual Meeting.

If you have an interest in the River, you will love helping us. It is this Network, which began with a generous grant, that sponsors our River Days of Action. It is composed of so many young people who live and work on the Mississippi. Our excellent staff keep us together and organized. The youth and enthusiasm keep me going. I'm pleased to represent you. We meet once a month for Advocacy.

Dr. Turner came to our meeting in LaCrosse, Wisconsin on Saturday. She expressed her delight that we were doing so much positive work and keeping our four states (IA, MN, WI, IL) busy advocating for state needs of the Mississippi River. She was very helpful in looking at our bylaws and needed changes, and encouraging us to keep working and advocating for the river. We discussed a lot of issues and our delight in being able to meet in person. Join us; join our Board. Just contact me! I am looking for a co-vice chair MRN representative. Interested? Contact me with UMRR or MRN in the subject line. We have a lot of work to do!

Nancy Porter
Vice chair of UMRR-ILO
Nancy55555@icloud.com

In Memoriam

We are saddened to note the passing of Rebecca Reiter, a former board member of LWVJC, on May 9, 2023, in Iowa City. She was profiled in the League's *Collective Memories: On Being in League* pages 16-17. The full obituary can be viewed at <https://www.press-citizen.com/obituaries/icp025124>. Our condolences go to her family.

Photo Gallery



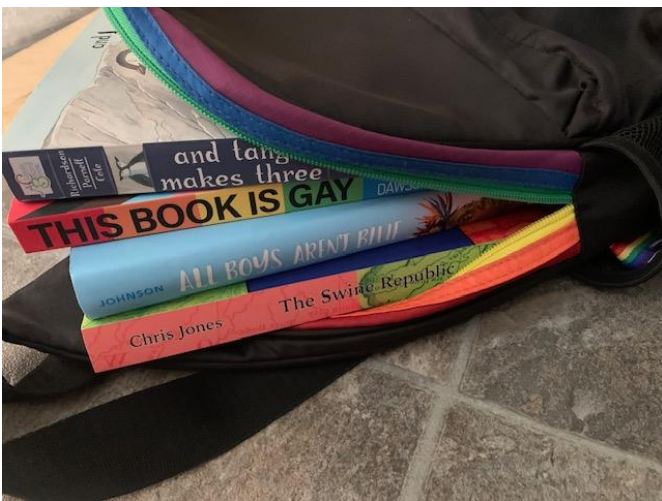
Left: Julie Noble is ready to register voters at the Iowa Arts Festival on June 3.

Right: L to R, Gail Ardery and Susan Craig registered voters at the Iowa City Juneteenth Festival on June 16.



Dr. Deborah Turner, President of LWVUS, delivered the keynote address at the 2023 LWVIA State Convention in Dubuque on Saturday, June 10.

State Convention Silent Auction Items from Johnson County



Mississippi River Days of Action

Nancy Porter (top left photo) organized the June 9 Mississippi River Days of Action event for League members prior to the State Convention. The group enjoyed a walk along the Mississippi River, lunch at Stone Cliff Winery in Dubuque, and then on to Galena, IL for a talk by Dale Glick, Galena public library historian, (bottom left photo) on the history of the Mississippi River.



Calendar of Events

Date	Time	Location	Program
Saturday, July 8	3-7 p.m.	South District Diversity Market, Pepperwood Plaza, Iowa City	Voter Registration
Monday, July 10	6:30-8 p.m.	virtual	LWVJC Board Meeting
Wednesday July 12	10 a.m.	Poindexters Coffee Graduate Hotel IC	coffee and casual conversation
Saturday, July 15	3-7 p.m.	South District Diversity Market, Pepperwood Plaza, Iowa City	Voter Registration
Saturday, July 22	3-7 p.m.	South District Diversity Market, Pepperwood Plaza, Iowa City	Voter Registration
Thursday, July 27	5:30-7 p.m.	Hazel Seaba's, 2640 N Scott Blvd, #124	Making Connections: Jane Wilch, Recycling Coordinator-Updates on recycling in Johnson County
Saturday, July 29	3-7 p.m.	South District Diversity Market, Pepperwood Plaza, Iowa City	Voter Registration
Saturday, August 5	3-7 p.m.	South District Diversity Market, Pepperwood Plaza, Iowa City	Voter Registration
Wednesday, August 9	10 a.m.	Poindexters Coffee Graduate Hotel IC	coffee and casual conversation
Saturday, August 12	3-7 p.m.	South District Diversity Market, Pepperwood Plaza, Iowa City	Voter Registration
Monday, August 14	6:30-8 p.m.	virtual	LWVJC Board Meeting
Saturday, August 19	3-7 p.m.	South District Diversity Market, Pepperwood Plaza, Iowa City	Voter Registration
Sunday, August 27	12-6 p.m.	CCAN-Con Community Engagement Festival, Ped Mall IC	Voter Registration
Thursday, August 31	5:30-7:30 p.m.	Unitarian Universalist Society, 2355 Oakdale Road, Coralville	Fall Reception and Membership Drive
Tuesday, September 19			National Voter Registration Day

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.